

The Fall 290

Chapter 290: Impartment

Zac frowned hesitantly when he heard that. He was extremely far from getting to the point of possessing four peak Dao Seeds. The Dao of Sanctuary and Rot were only at the early stage, and he had no idea when he would be able to push them all the way to the peak. Yrial seemed to understand what Zac was thinking and snorted.

"You're lucky to have such a magnanimous teacher. I will help you out a bit, though most of the work will depend on yourself," Yrial said as he got up from his lazy position by the pond.

"What do you mean?" Zac said hesitantly.

"As my terminal, and only, disciple I will give you additional two gifts before you leave here," he said, and the next moment his aura exploded outward.

Immense powers radiated outward from Yrial as he floated up into the air. The islands beneath fractured and disappeared, its debris swallowed into a huge circle of energy that appeared behind him. Torrential amounts of energy ran through the circle, and it was as though it constantly changed its nature. The main two elements were those of fire and ice, and the debris was constantly remolded by these two forces.

Sometimes the circle gave Zac the impression of a cold asteroid belt and the next moment it was scorching hot plasma. It was both, and it was neither. Zac realized the difference between the C and D-Grade for the first time, and any last doubt that The Great Redeemer was actually a C-Grade powerhouse disappeared when he sensed the all-consuming aura of his master.

"For over two hundred thousand years I walked my path, never looking back," Yrial said, his voice completely different compared to the one earlier.

It contained endless strength and conviction. Gone was the lazy youth who loved to see his reflection in the pond, and replaced with a powerhouse who had walked over mountains of corpses to reach his station.

"I impart my path of Cyclic Supremacy to you, in hopes you will reach the grand terminus," he said next, his words echoing like thunder in Zac's mind.

Zac looked up with somber eyes, seeing the enormous circle of untold power slowly shrink and condense until it only had a diameter of two centimeters. It still contained the massive amounts of energies, and it shone like a sun as it flew straight into Zac's forehead, forcing him down on his knees. The next moment he found himself in the miraculous space in front of the huge fractal once again.

The enormous fractal lit up with boundless luster, and it caused stars to light up in the pitch-black expanse around it. Each star felt ancient, as though it had existed since the beginning of time. Thousands upon thousands of them appeared, each of them containing boundless knowledge and power.

Zac was completely frozen by the sight, but an enormous snap shocked him awake. It was the large fractal that had suddenly gained a massive crack that covered a large part of it. Zac didn't know why, but

he instinctively knew that it was putting an extreme strain on the fractal to summon those mysterious stars.

Zac quickly looked around for what to do, since he knew this was something extremely important. Was he supposed to fix the fractal somehow? He prepared to move toward it, but the next moment he felt a dozen tendrils approach him. He couldn't see them with his eyes, but his Dao Seeds strongly resonated with them.

They were the pure unadulterated Dao, and he felt that he could gain a new seed by just grabbing one of the tendrils and absorb its knowledge. But he held himself back as he remembered Yrial's words. Gaining random Dao Seeds could hamper one's growth rather than helping, so he focused on the tendril that most strongly resonated with his Dao Seeds.

He wasn't sure how long this magical state would last, seeing the worsening state of the fractal. So he hurriedly focused his soul toward one of the tendrils, one teeming with life and vitality. He knew it wasn't the Dao of Trees, but rather something much grander. Not even the Dao of Life inside the construct was more than a shadow compared to what this tendril represented, and it was as though Zac was mesmerized as he approached it.

The moment his soul connected with the tendril the world changed again. He was once again the Lifebringer with its inexhaustible lifeforce, continuously growing and expanding. Everything could be a source of growth and empowerment, no matter if it was the planet, the air, or the universe itself. Even traveling through the boundless void could provide it with the sustenance it required.

A warm exuberance spread through his body, and Zac almost felt he would be able to live forever as long as he had access to Cosmic Energy. But he soon calmed down as his connection with the tendril ended, and he saw that it was slowly returning to its star in the distance.

Another crack in the fractal reminded him of the urgency of the situation, and he immediately pushed his soul toward another tendril, this one containing boundless darkness and desolation. Zac stabilized his mind and connected with it as well, and once again the world changed.

He once again saw the Lifebringer, but this time it didn't shine with boundless vitality. The gargantuan tree still floated through the boundless expanse, but its leaves were no longer emerald crystals. They were shrunken and graying, and some sections of the enormous canopy were completely barren.

Nothing lasted forever. Life would inevitably give way to decay, and even the Tree of Life was no exception. Its trunk was mostly hollowed out, and massive lifeforce was leaking out in a slow death. Rot spread from within, and soon there would be nothing left.

Zac shuddered as the connection with the tendril broke, and he brought some of the death with him. He had no idea whether what he saw was true, or whether it was an adaptation to fit his own Dao. But in either case, he felt that his newly acquired seed had grown substantially in its space in his mind.

By this point the whole space was shaking, and Zac quickly moved on to the next tendril that resonated with him. It gave him a feeling of piety, of self-sacrifice and that everything in the universe was connected. He felt it was strongly connected with his Dao of Sanctuary, and he quickly connected with it. He was suddenly standing next to millions of people, looking up at the ancient protector, seeing the gentle smile on his face as he turned to face the end of the universe.

But Zac had no time to glean anything as the vision shuddered and broke apart. The insight slipped out of his grasp, and he once again saw the large fractal. This time it was illusory, and in just a few seconds it was completely gone. The next moment the stars in the universe reseeded, taking their boundless knowledge with them.

The vision ended and he was once again standing on the last intact island.

Zac immediately sat down with his eyes closed, ruminating on the massive gains he had just received. It was only thirty minutes later he once again opened his eyes. The first thing he noticed was that Yrial's form had grown dim, no longer exhibiting the boundless power as before. Zac had a feeling that imparting Zac with these massive Dao insights didn't come without a steep cost.

"This gift is immense," Zac finally said as he opened his eyes. "Is there anything I can do in return?"

"What could you do, little brat?" Yrial said with a snort. "Who knows how long I've been dead? Just be thankful that I didn't waste my impartment on someone else after I created this place."

"What do you mean?" Zac asked with confusion as he got up to his feet.

"What I gave you was a Dao Impartment. Most can only do that once in one's lifetime, and only after you have formalized your path," Yrial explained. "The cost is also massive, and very few are willing to pay the price. But then again, it does not really matter seeing as I am dead."

"I'll remember this," Zac said with a nod.

He remembered the massive fractal and realized that was likely a representation of Yrial's understanding of the Dao. It had taken serious damage to summon those mysterious stars, meaning that Imparting the Dao like that would likely cause massive damage to one's foundation.

"Don't be so serious," Yrial said with a wave as he produced a crystal.

"This is my second gift to you," he said. "I took the liberty of studying your core a bit more while you were walking in your master's shoes. It is marvelous, but it seems to come with a drawback. It is pretty arduous to change your race, no?" Yrial said.

Zac hurriedly nodded in agreement. The issue of changing between his two races was a constant annoyance. He hated the feeling of dying, and he was worried that something disastrous would sooner or later happen while he was out cold while he changed form.

"I need to essentially die to change class. Or at least I haven't found a better method," Zac said.

"I figured as much," Yrial nodded. "The two sides are almost completely separated, which isn't the case with the normal Duplicity Core. This crystal contains a skill that you can learn as both an undead and as a human. It will start the transformation for you without having to die. There is still a limit though, there is simply too little interconnectivity in your Node, a proper cycle isn't formed. So it will still take roughly 10 to 15 seconds, and you will be quite weakened during that time."

"That's still a lot better compared to the old method, I was out cold for minutes there," Zac eagerly said as he accepted the crystal.

It might still be pretty risky to use it in battle, but it was far better than before.

"Don't worry too much. The time needed to change class should drastically decrease when your core upgrades to the next rank," Yrial said. "I believe the skill should still be usable as well. If not I'll just modify it when you come back."

"How do I upgrade it?" Zac probed.

"I would guess that you need to feed it a higher grade of life and death," Yrial said. "A great treasure representing each half of the whole. That and a lot of energy."

As he held the crystal in his hand he was amazed at the means of Yrial. In just the few hours while he was undergoing the trial Yrial had managed to get a grasp of Zac's odd core and design a Skill that worked with both his classes to better utilize it. Not only that, but he also had time to inscribe it into a crystal, something that he had heard was normally extremely hard.

Meanwhile, he hadn't even taken the first step toward creating a skill of his own, something he knew was important in the future. From what he understood every stage came with less handholding from the system.

He knew he would still receive a few skills in the E-Grade, but he was also expected to create new ones himself, or at least get his hands on them some other way. At least he had gained [Cyclic Strike] that might help him take the first step in that direction. Zac immediately infused some energy into the crystal, but suddenly his face got odd as he looked up at his master with a helpless look.

"What? Is something the matter?" he asked with innocent eyes.

"No... It's nothing," Zac sighed as he looked at the name of his new skill. "It's perfect."

[Beauty Yrial's Great Transformation Skill]

"That's fine then," Yrial nodded. "With this, the first trial is over. You will not be able to enter this place again within 10 years. Before you come back you should at least have reached level 140 and have pushed your three Dao Groupings to High Fragments. Otherwise, you might not survive the trial. And even if you do I'll just deduct credits because you cannot follow instructions."

"Ten years?" Zac blurted out, but he suddenly took another look at Yrial's faded form.

The impartment had no doubt drained the spirit quite a bit, and perhaps he needed to rest for a decade to restore his form. He was only a fragment of a soul after all, and the might he released for that instant was massive.

"Now, don't disappoint me. If you ever doubt yourself because your unremarkable looks or shitty aptitude remember this; The great Lord of Cycles took you in, so you cannot be a complete waste of a human being," Yrial said with a wave, and the next moment the air started to shimmer and distort.

Zac was about to give one final thanks, but Yrial's voice once echoed out through the area before he was completely ejected. This time it held a majesty that reminded Zac of the great power he emitted right before the impartment.

"The path you have chosen is even harder than mine. Many will tell you to give it up, to not bite off more than you can chew. Ignore them, they are condemned for mediocrity. Only when you walk your own truth will you be free."

He once again found himself inside the grandiose hallway of the Towers of Myriad Dao, and Zac looked up at the ten-meter high statue with mixed emotions. There was no denying that Yrial was a bit annoying and a true narcissist, but the help and gifts he had provided might last Zac a lifetime.

Yrial had taken Zac's formless idea and turned it into a reality. Zac now knew exactly where he was at and what steps he needed to take to truly walk upon the path of Life and Death. But it had also made him realize just how much he needed to improve before he could evolve to E-Grade.

Luckily Yrial had provided him with an extremely valuable kick-start to get him going.