

The Fall 318

Chapter 318: Dao Funnel

"He's dead?" Void's Disciple said with a small frown without looking up from the scriptures in front of him.

Inevitability hesitantly nodded and muttered a confirmation, unable to read their leader's mood as usual.

"The fulcrum teamed up with the leader of the demonkin invaders to assault Salvation. The large explosions at the end appear to be the collective detonation of all his Silver Guards," Inevitability said.

"How did he manage to move so many of his puppets to all those towns unnoticed?" Void's Disciple casually asked, but fear immediately gripped Inevitability's heart. "At least a million people have died, robbing our Lord of his harvest."

"That... It was me and Harbinger," Inevitability admitted, her heart rapidly beating.

"Explain," Void Said, looking up from the ancient texts for the first time since Inevitability entered his cultivation chamber at the bottom of the expansive hive.

Void's Disciple looked unassuming and even a bit frail, but Inevitability knew that he was anything but. He had always been mysterious to herself and her brother, and they did not even know his age or which hive he originated from.

They only knew that even before the integration the two of them were unable to as much as touch his clothes when teaming up. Now that he had made massive strides in the Dao and racking up all those titles he was far beyond their reach.

It was a shame, she thought. He was a perfect mate now that they had evolved away from the restrictive fetters of the Anointed. Unfortunately, he was just too focused on the mission, to the point it was all-consuming.

"We wanted a back-up plan for when the lord arrives," she admitted, not daring to lie. "We thought that if we kept that man happy he would speak up for us. We didn't expect him to detonate the puppets though, but rather capture the townspeople when the lord Redeemer arrived."

"Did you at least retrieve the Origin Funnel?" he asked with a sigh.

"It was on Salvation's body when he died. We believe it's with his killers now," Inevitability admitted with a grimace.

"So the fulcrum is currently not only walking around with one of the beacons that guide our lord, but also all the Origin Dao that lunatic collected?" Void's Disciple said, the air around him starting to twist and turn.

Void's Disciple closed his eyes in exasperation and lightly started tapping his finger on the table. Inevitability started to shudder as she knew that was a sign that he was greatly annoyed, and carnage almost always followed. But the tapping suddenly stopped, allowing Inevitability to breathe out in relief, feeling like a sacrificial offering being granted clemency.

“Well, it’s just one of the beacons, and the Funnel is just a copy the lord made in his youth. The loss is regrettable, but not overly so. That Mystic Realm is far more important. If we can provide our Lord with that thing he will likely not care about our other failings,” Void’s Disciple muttered.

Inevitability ardently nodded, extremely happy to change the subject. The loss of the Funnel was a worthy price to get rid of that man in her opinion. She might not have dared to kill Salvation herself, but the less competition the better.

“What about the church?” Inevitability hesitantly asked. “That thing is valuable, but I don’t believe the Great Lord is willing to make an enemy of the Church of Everlasting Dao.”

“Soon after it awakens the entrances will close. All three of us will enter at that time,” Void’s Disciple calmly explained. “The Mystic Realm is completely separated with high-grade shielding. No karma threads will leak out, allowing us to kill everything without holding back. Only the three of us need to return from that place, the rest can die inside, no matter if it’s the church or the aboriginals.”

Inevitability’s eyes lit up in anticipation when she heard Void’s words. They had been forced to stay hidden for so long that her whole body was itching in anticipation. Her killing spree in the hunt had barely whet her appetite for blood, and they had avoided all interesting targets out of fear of exposing their intentions or their lord.

But it seemed that it all was coming to an end.

“Even the fulcrum?” Inevitability probed.

Fury still suffused her as she thought of her shameful display during the hunt. Every day she dreamed of tearing that man and that little chick apart, but she held herself back due to fear of the person in front of her.

“Nothing can go wrong inside the Mystic Realm,” Void’s Disciple said after a brief pause. “If he enters, then that’s his fate.”

Bloodlust started to leak from her body as Inevitability imagined running into Zachary Atwood inside the Mystic Realm. Perhaps she could trick that human to go there without Void finding out?

Zac and Ogras sat hidden inside an array, three hours from the battlefield. They had pushed their tired bodies to the limits to get as far away as possible from that place, afraid that someone would take advantage of their situation. But their bodies could only endure so much, and Ogras was unable to keep going after an hour, forcing Zac to carry him. Finally they found a Cave to hide in while they recuperated.

The moment they sat down they ate a second set of healing pills, and as if by an unspoken agreement created some distance before they started to ponder on the Dao. They had both been in a desperate battle that pushed them to their limits, and it was time to reap the benefits.

Zac gained more from the last battle compared to all of the battles with the Incursion Leaders thus far. An all-out struggle was truly the best way to move forward. His eyes closed as he focused on the large axe fractal in his body. He wasn’t pondering on the Dao of Sharpness again, but rather on the Dao of Heaviness. It hadn’t been that long since he improved it last time since he evolved it during the hunt.

But the previous battle showcased multiple sources of heaviness for him, which he wanted to capitalize on.

The first was the three instances of pressure that his body was subjected to when summoning the axes for [Deforestation]. The last one placed such a burden for him that his body almost collapsed, and if his bones didn't break first even his soul would be wounded. The first axe, [Axe of Felling], also contained a hint of imperviousness and solidity that was in a sense related to heaviness.

The second heaviness could be gleaned from the immense explosion that almost killed them earlier. Just the shockwave from the blast was powerful enough to cost him a quarter of his Miasma, and being within sustained errant energies was like being in a zone with far higher gravity. Zac believed the two insights together with other snippets he had gathered from various fights and other sources were enough to push his seed to the peak naturally.

He already possessed one peak seed, but that one came at the cost of multiple Dao Treasures, and he couldn't consume them so freely. Besides, Zac noticed that the effect of the treasures was waning when he improved his Seed of Sharpness. He only had a few shots left to use Dao Treasures before they became useless.

At that point, he would need to get treasures of a higher grade, but it was a complete waste to use such a thing on a Dao Seed. The higher-grade Dao Treasures were rather meant to improve Dao Fragments, and they could save years of effort rather than months. To use them at this juncture was a complete waste.

The two were strapped for time, but both of them needed a day or two of recuperation before they could move again. Ogras was especially badly off as his constitution was far inferior to Zac's. The golden beam had even wounded his psyche, which was much thornier to heal. Zac, therefore, didn't feel rushed when it took hours to enter a calm state of meditation, but when he finally arrived there the rest came surprisingly easy.

Zac opened his eyes an unknown time later, and after glancing over noticed that Ogras was still in the middle of meditation. Ogras even seemed to be in the middle of a breakthrough judging by the mysterious fluctuations surrounding him, and Zac closed his eyes again.

He didn't want to disturb the demon while he was right in the threshold of improving and instead focused on a second Dao Seed. This time it was Sanctuary. He had been extremely close for a while now thanks to the partial vision, their desperate situation where Zac shielded the two from the blast was enough to push him over the edge.

When he opened his eyes the next time he saw Ogras fiddling with something on the ground, and Zac's eyes widened in shock when he saw it was a piece of Salvation's head. More precisely it was his forehead that still had the shimmering golden fractal imprinted.

"What the hell are you doing?!" Zac wheezed with alarm, knowing how terrible that fractal was. He even forgot checking on his boosted Daos due to the shocking scene.

"Oh, you're up?" Ogras said with a start, having been completely engrossed with the fractal. "I believe this is the control inscription for the array that allowed Salvation to possess so many puppets."

"You better not get any ideas," Zac muttered. "I'm pretty sure the array continuously consumed his life force. When I met him during the hunt he looked slightly above my age, and you saw how rapidly he aged when that thing lit up. He might have been Emily's age when he got his hands on that cursed thing."

"Don't worry, I won't infuse my head with some unknown array. I have enough troublesome things in my body as it is," Ogras snorted.

Zac sighed, knowing the feeling all too well. The multiverse was simply too full of double-edged treasures. Or perhaps it was fairer to say that nothing came without a price. A treasure wouldn't simply boost one's power to great heights without exacting a price in return. It was true for the creature living in Ogras' shadows, and it was true for the splinter in his head.

"Still, it is very interesting," Ogras continued. "I believe I have found a pretty important clue."

"Oh? What's that?" Zac asked with interest as he walked over.

His right arm was still mostly useless as his bones hadn't mended, but at least the muscles in his body had healed enough for him to move about effortlessly. It would take a few more days to be able to push his body in a battle though.

"This thing resonated with me when I evolved a Dao Seed," Ogras explained. "I think it contains Origin Dao."

"What?" Zac asked with surprise as he looked down on the fractal.

"I believe this treasure steals the Origin Dao of the people who Salvation turned to puppets, storing it somehow," Ogras explained. "That would also fit with why that old goat wants to find these baby planets. It might be this type of thing that would be forced upon the so-called fulcrums."

Zac slowly nodded as he mulled over the information. It felt like they were getting close to the truth, although they were still missing some pieces of information.

"It would also explain why such a powerful person as Salvation wasn't even on the Dao Ladder," Zac added. "The array might have stolen all the Origin Dao around him, including his own."

"Exactly," Ogras said with some excitement in his face. "So what I am thinking is this; What if we used all this Origin Dao for ourselves?"

Zac's heartbeat sped up in anticipation as he looked down at the fractal. Even if his improvement was extremely rapid it would take a lot of time to not only reach the peak with his six Dao Seeds but also fuse them into three Fragments.

The fusion itself was far harder than simply reaching the peak, but he was running out of time. But being bathed in a huge amount of Origin Dao might be the key to pushing his Dao further, allowing him to quickly evolve before the Dominators did something irreversible.

"So how would we go about getting our hands on the Origin Dao?" Zac asked with some glee on his face.

"Huh? I have no idea," Ogras snorted. "We'll need to do some research."

Zac threw Ogras an even stare before shaking his head with annoyance.

"What about safety? Do you think the Dominators will be able to track that thing?" Zac asked.

Ogras frowned when he heard the news, and he looked down at the pouch fastened to his belt. But suddenly his eyes lit up again.

"I can throw his corpse into the Mystic Realm for now. That place is completely isolated, and there's no way the dominators will be able to sense anything across dimensions. We can leisurely study the thing inside," he said.

"Sounds like a plan," Zac agreed with a nod. Creating a stable tunnel to the Mystic Realm was on his agenda in any case. "Keep me posted. Don't try to keep that thing for yourself, there are a lot of people on our island who could benefit from that."

"Fine. You ready to go?" Ogras said with a roll of his eyes.

The two kept as high a pace they could, considering the state of their bodies. But it still took one day longer to return to the small outpost town the Marshall Clan controlled. The guards looked at Zac and Ogras as though they were monsters when they arrived, but their captain still stepped forward with a shocking revelation about worldwide explosions caused by Salvation.

Zac finally understood what Salvation meant with his words in the end, but he knew there was nothing to be done about the situation. The two stepped through the teleporter back to Port Atwood, Zac's mood greatly dampened by the realization that over a million people had died because he killed Salvation.

But the two didn't even have time to digest the news of Salvation's final revenge as Emily rushed them the moment they stepped out of the teleporter.

"They've found it!"