

## The Fall 321

### Chapter 321: Severing Karma

Zac wasn't sure what to think when seeing the old man getting down on his knees, but he knew that whoever was inside the silver cloud wasn't a simple character. However, panic started to set in when he made a horrible connection. Between the silver haze and having disciples on newly integrated planets there was one clear contender of who hid within the haze - The Great Redeemer.

Was it possible that this secluded monastery was yet another seed planted by the Great Redeemer long ago, just like the Medhin Clan and the Dominators? Had they been biding their time all this while until they finally found the means to summon their lord?

Fury started to build in Zac's heart as he thought about the betrayal. Had these seemingly altruistic monks sacrificed the whole world for their selfish gain? The pained face of the old monk once again flashed in his mind before his eyes turned to his trusty axe in his hand.

If this truly was the arrival of the Great Redeemer things might already be over and their planet doomed. But should he unleash [Deforestation] in a final act of defiance? Perhaps it would even buy time for his transfer talisman to complete its activation. The token he got from Yrial was still in his possession, and it might allow him to flee even the seemingly hopeless situation in front of him.

But he knew it took over ten seconds to activate it, so the plan felt like a long shot. But even if it worked, then what? He would be stranded god knows where, while leaving his friends and family behind. He wouldn't be able to learn of their fates until he managed to get back to Earth, and that in of itself would be a form of torture. But it was better to kill some traitors than simply giving up.

Strangely enough, he was unable to act on his idea. It was as though he had a mental block, making him incapable to turn thoughts into action. He wasn't restrained or under hypnosis, yet his arm was unable to swing his axe at the monks around him.

"Decisiveness can lead to greatness, but it can also lead to ruin. Decisiveness will turn to foolishness unless you first make sure your path is true" a voice suddenly resounded in his head, making Zac immediately turn his eyes to the figure within the portal again.

The voice had spoken straight into his mind rather than out loud, but Zac breathed out in relief when he heard it. The reason for his relief was very simple; the voice didn't belong to The Great Redeemer.

It was likely that his plan had been seen through by this person and somehow stopped through unknown means. So it was both with anticipation and trepidation he saw the figure slowly emerge from the golden pillar. But reality sometimes didn't conform to imagination and Zac couldn't stop himself from gawking in shock when he saw the true form of the mysterious powerhouse.

The same could be said about most of the monks in the square, as they threw each other small questioning glances, confusion clear on their faces. It was not a rugged warrior like Greatest that stepped out of the light, nor was it a sage monk. It was rather a fat little child only wearing a thick bead necklace and a pair of silver silk pants.

He looked mostly human apart from his earlobes who dangled all the way down to his shoulders and a set of mercurial silver eyes. He was also completely bald, with a thin line of silver fractals starting between his brows and going back over his head.

Zac's first thought was that something had gone wrong with the summoning, but he soon realized that wasn't the case. The child didn't seem the slightest surprised to be here, and the fact that he was actually floating in the air was quite telling that he wasn't some random kid ripped through space. Thea had already told him that flying was the mark of the D-Rank, so the kid in front of him was at least that powerful.

Suddenly he remembered the comforting words of Calrin when Emily was dismayed about her youthful appearance. Was this kid some supreme existence that had was so skilled that he embarked on the path of cultivation early? The fat child threw Zac a knowing wink when he saw the confusion on his face.

"Don't be alarmed. I simply saw the future you contemplated with the axe in your hand and removed it from the realm of possibility," the little cherub once again spoke in his mind before turning to the Abbot.

"No need for such formalities child," the kid said with a sweet voice.

Oddly enough it was the voice of an adult, though it was quite high for a male, and Zac could immediately confirm the voice in his head was the same as the one that exited the child's mouth. The Abbot hurriedly got to his feet, completely unflustered about the odd appearance of his apparent master. Zac meanwhile had trouble digesting the information he received mentally.

The child said that it had removed a possible future as though it was nothing special. If one was able to change the future like that, what couldn't he do? Just what kind of monster had the Abbot summoned?

"This penniless monk is called Everlasting Peace, may I ask Master's name?" the abbot said, only increasing Zac's confusion as he stood on the sidelines. Did they not know each other?

"I am the 84th incarnation of the Lotus Emperor. Some call me 84th Fatty or Lord 84th depending on mood and karmic ties," the child said with a laugh as he looked at the mountain. "How fascinating."

The next moment reality shifted and everyone found themselves at the foot of the mountain, in front of the steps leading up to the summit. Zac didn't understand how he got there since it was instantaneous and it felt as though he had always stood there somehow, making it seem like his past had changed.

"Spirit consecrated through faith," the child muttered before turning away from the mountain. "In any case. Have you prepared yourself?"

"Disciple is ready," the Abbot said with a somber expression. "Disciple's fellow monks have been informed as well."

"I'm sorry to interrupt, but just what is going on?" Zac finally interjected, unable to sit on the sidelines any longer.

The child looked over at Zac, and after a brief pause smiled.

"When I reached the peak of my power I decided to split my soul into one hundred thousand pieces and enter those pieces into Samsara," the small child said. "It birthed 100 000 incarnations without any

recollection of their true self. Only when reaching high enough power will our memories return. I was the 84th incarnation to regain its memories.”

The explanation wasn’t the one Zac was asking for, but his brows still rose in shock when he understood the implications of what the child said. Doing such a crazy thing must require not only enormous power but also great conviction. And if this powerful person was just a small part of his true self, just how powerful was the true Lotus Emperor?

“Isn’t it risky? What if a part of you dies before regaining your memories?” Zac asked, curiosity overcoming the oddity of the situation.

“To understand the Karmic cycle is to understand all parts of life, including death. Through walking one hundred thousand paths I will better understand the universe, and through the universe better understand the self. If an incarnation dies so will that part of me die,” the child explained with equanimity. “Such is the price of enlightenment.”

“It is the fault of this penniless monk. This one was not sure whether he was allowed to say anything before teacher arrived,” Abbot Everlasting Peace explained, understanding what Zac was truly asking about. “I wanted you to understand what transpired here today. Master has come to take me and my fellow monks away.”

“Take you away?” Zac dumbly repeated.

It turned out it was a farewell rather than a betrayal. But Zac suddenly realized the implications of what the old man was saying.

“You’re not staying for the battle against the undead or the other incursions?” Zac probed, some dissatisfaction creeping into his voice.

He had been working his ass off to protect Earth and needed all the help he could get if they wanted to save their planet. The Abbot was likely the strongest person amongst the humans apart from himself due to his high-tiered Dao, and he possesses mysterious insight into Karma that could greatly assist their efforts.

The fact that he decided to take his monks and leave Earth in the moment of its need was almost as great a blow as a true betrayal. He finally understood the look of the old monk who had given him pointers at the stairs, and a frown started forming on his face.

“You mentioned severing Karma. You’re going to cut and run when the undead hordes are destroying everything in its path like locusts, and when we face threats from all directions? I hoped you would join the efforts to protect our home when you had healed up,” Zac continued, but suddenly he realized something and looked at the little child floating next to them.

“Don’t look at me,” the child said with a shake of his head. “I could kick out the incursions, but that would only create a worse future for your planet.”

Zac didn’t say anything, but his face must have conveyed his skepticism.

“Your friend and I walk the same path of Karma, which is extremely rare in the Multiverse. That is how we found each other. Through the boundless Dao, our paths converged and a Karmic connection was

formed. I showed him how to create this gate through that link," Lord 84th explained. "But I am not without enemies. No one would reach any great heights without creating some enmities. Resources are limited after all."

"Karmic Cultivators are extremely hard to kill because of our ability to see, and to a certain extent tamper with, the great tapestry of fate. But our weakness is that we cannot allow our Karma to get entangled with too many people."

"I can see the threat you're facing," the child continued, and to Zac's surprise a slightly hazy picture of the Great Redeemer materialized. "This one utilizes a rudimentary method to control Karmic ties to locate your planet. I could easily cut those ties, but by doing so I would get billions of entanglements with the living beings living on this tiny planet."

"My enemies would eventually find out, and those people are all far stronger than this man," the child continued. "They would capture everyone on this planet and torture your souls for eternity just to cause trouble to my cultivation."

"Is there nothing to be done, master?" Abbot Everlasting Peace suddenly interjected. "Completely severing Karma has proven troublesome for this talentless monk. Perhaps if we could provide my friend with some small assistance this poor monk would be able to completely move forward with a pure heart."

Zac finally realized the true reason why the Abbot had asked for his presence. He likely felt bad about leaving Earth and wanted to get some small assistance from his master. Zac was by far the strongest person, so having him here would be the best option to improve Earth's fighting chance.

The child seemed to mull it over for a few seconds before slowly nodded and pointed at the Abbot's forehead. The old man closed his eyes for a few seconds before his eyes opened again with some excitement as he turned toward Zac.

"If benefactor would be so kind as to lend his hand for a second?" the old man said before grabbing it.

A burst of odd energy suddenly entered Zac's body, and the sky was suddenly filled with odd lines in all kinds of colors. There were golden lines of various thickness that reached toward each of the monks, and a silver one swirling around Lord 84th like a living snake. There were also four black pillars reaching into the sky in the distance, looking like sickly tears in space.

Three of them were bunched together to the north, whereas one was off by itself far on the horizon.

"This penniless monk is temporarily sharing his vision with benefactor," the old man explained. "The lines are the ties of Karma. The four sinister lines are connections to the man that master conjured. There was a fifth one but I sense that you are responsible for its severance."

"I killed Salvation a week ago. He had somehow become the in-name disciple of The Great Redeemer," Zac said with a nod.

"Something in his possession is still calling for its master," the old man said and indicated the line by itself. "Taking it into a separate space will not work. The line will simply lead to the entrance."

Zac didn't understand how the old man could know of his plan, but he rather focused on the message.

“What should we do? Destroy everything in his possession?” Zac asked.

“That will not help either,” the old man said with a shake of his head. "But this penniless monk now has a way."