

The Fall 388

Chapter 388: Toxicity

Zac desperately tried to grab onto the demon before it was too late, but Ogras had clearly learnt from his failure during the auction held by the New World Government. Zac didn't exactly know what happened, but he somehow missed the demon, instead grabbing right behind where he stood. He couldn't be sure, but it felt like Ogras had somehow influenced him to slightly misjudge his position.

Was it the Dao Seed that the demon had gained recently?

Ogras had let it slip in conversation a few times, where he mentioned Dao Seeds as plurals rather than singular. Zac learned of it after they did their respective Inheritances. Perhaps The Umbra provided Ogras with a similar Dao Impartment that Zac himself enjoyed.

Galau looked a bit confused at the exchange, but he didn't comment on it. He instead continued to explain how the auction was handled.

"The Naspheyi will only divulge what items will be put to auction within the current segment for bronze members," Galau explained. "If you don't see anything that tempts you, you can visit one of the other establishments inside to relax until the next segment starts. But the items in the final segment will not be divulged at all, as they want to maintain maximum participation for the top treasures."

Zac nodded in understanding, feeling that these guys really knew how to do business. Such a setup would stop people from leaving early, and most people would still spend money even if they didn't find anything to buy. And people would perhaps become more willing to fork out some real money if they had been plied with alcohol for a few hours before the final section.

The two walked around the enormous lobby for a while as there still was some time. Suddenly the shadows shuddered and Ogras reappeared, looking like he had just experienced a crushing defeat.

"Bunch of Puppets, don't know what I expected," Ogras muttered with a constipated look.

Zac snorted in derision as the three entered the auction hall, loath to make a comment. A quick glance indicated that there were actually fewer seats than he had expected. He guessed that there were roughly 3-4000 seats in total, with roughly two-thirds being cramped cinema seats in the back.

The group didn't have to use those though thanks to Galau and were instead shown to a table some distance from the scene. The table was luckily equipped with a decent-sized screen that would show the items, allowing them to take a good look at all everything.

Zac immediately started to go through the catalog of items that would appear to see if there was anything of use to them. He was surprised to note that quite a few items were listed as unknown items, only describing what they looked like. It seemed quite possible to make a few good deals if your eyes were discerning enough.

Ogras wasn't nearly as curious, and he only took a quick glance at the catalogue.

"It's just the opening segment," Ogras said with disinterest as he indicated a puppet to bring a bottle of liquor. "Those weapons in the start are pretty good. They are there to create some excitement, but the rest is just slightly better than things you can buy in the shops."

“Don’t get too drunk,” Zac warned. “We’re not here to mess around.”

"Not much else to do here when the brothel is full of automatons," Ogras scoffed as he started to look around.

“Well, not many who have the ability to get their hands on a Tower token would be willing to work as a... courtesan. Likewise, those types of classes are generally considered non-combat, which precludes entry to the Tower of Eternity,” Galau coughed with some embarrassment. “But I am sure that a handsome man like you would be able to find a paramour in one of the bars.”

Ogras only snorted in response as he kept observing the other guests. Zac himself only shook his head with a smile, already having heard the demon complain about the lack of brothels in Port Atwood on multiple occasions.

When it was around ten minutes before the auction started the area above their heads was starting to fill up with floating platforms of varying size. On top of them sat groups of people who mostly looked quite impressive, or at least wealthy.

“That’s the VIP platforms, the higher it floats generally mean the higher status of its occupant,” Galau said with a hushed tone, probably afraid to draw the attention of the bigshots upstairs.

Zac shot a glance above, not really caring about the special treatment. It was not like it mattered where he sat as long as he could buy the items he needed.

The auction started soon enough, and Zac was impressed with the quality of the items presented. All kinds of items were sold off in rapid succession, ranging from pills to arrays to weapons. There were some raw materials as well, but Zac noticed that most items were ready to use, and things that might help when climbing the tower.

However, there was nothing that Zac couldn’t do without, so he never placed a single bid. Most items went for between 5 and 15 million Nexus coins, which meant they were decent items, but nothing rare. It was a bit disappointing, but Zac knew the items would get increasingly impressive as the auction went on.

“How are the prices?” Zac asked to the more experienced Ogras.

“The starting bids are slightly below what you would usually pay for the items outside this dimension, but they usually end up a tad more expensive,” the demon said after some consideration. “It looks like items that will prove helpful in the tower has a slightly higher premium at around 50% to 80%.”

Zac nodded, realizing that Calrin had been spot on with his estimation. This place truly was a money-making machine for the established forces, where they allowed to earn far more money on their products compared to the outside.

Ogras placed a few bids for fun, but he got quickly bored when he realized that the process was completely anonymous where you placed your bid through an array on the table.

“What’s with the secrecy?” Ogras muttered with annoyance. “Takes the fun out of the bidding process.”

“Open bidding caused a bit too much chaos in the end,” Galau said with a wry smile. “A few strong people suppressed the prices of any items they wanted. So the Naspheyi clan finally installed arrays in

the table to allow anonymous bidding for everyone's safety. Of course, anyone is still able to bid openly if they so wish."

Zac nodded in agreement, feeling it was for the best. It would help normal people from becoming targets of the powerful factions, and lessen the risk of getting robbed afterward since the items would be exchanged anonymously after each section.

It did make his own back-up idea of robbing the treasures he needed almost impossible though, so he could only hope the items he was looking for wouldn't end up too expensive.

Hours passed as the event proceeded, and Zac started to become a bit bored. He hadn't placed a single bet so far, not daring to waste his limited money before he found what he needed. He did learn quite a bit by the Auctioneer's explanations about the various treasures, and the day gave him a lot better understanding of what drove the value of treasures.

When it came to Spirit Tools there were generally two factors that decided its value. The first factor was the material the item was created from. Different materials and combinations had different potential it seemed. Some weapons couldn't be upgraded very far due to poor quality of the core material, whereas others had greater potential.

It was the same as with most people. Very few had the capability to reach the peak of cultivation. Their constitution simply wouldn't allow it unless they managed to remold their bodies through some extreme fortuitous encounter.

Zac had already somewhat instinctively picked up on this difference when he gathered a couple of Spirit Tools earlier, but he couldn't explain it better than the fact that a few of them were better than others.

There were a lot of Spirit Tools for sale on the auction, and it was standard for the auctioneer to explain what the item's core materials were, and its guaranteed evolution. The weapons who could evolve further were tens of times more expensive than those with a limited progression path.

The other thing that could have a large impact on an item was whether it was attuned. It seemed to work just like with crystals, where there were normal Nexus Crystals, but also items like Flame Crystals and Divine Crystals. A weapon with a popular attunement was usually many times more expensive than one without.

After figuring these things out he had a bit disheartening realization about his own weapon, [Verun's Bite]. It was a weapon that he got from the Merit shop during his beast wave quest, and he knew by now that it wasn't some top tier item. The weapon had no attunement, and Zac realized its materials were nothing too special either after seeing all the Spirit Tools on display.

However, it was a weapon he had grown extremely accustomed to, and he was loath to give it up for something else unless absolutely necessary. He also had a feeling that Verun had its own points of uniqueness due to the fact that the Tool Spirit could actually appear and fight. The auctioneer had never mentioned such a thing when presenting all these weapons, and she was clearly working hard on the up-sell.

It made Zac believe that the mysterious stone he fed to Verun all back when it was still F-Grade was an extremely precious item. It was his luck that no one on Earth could figure out what it was, which allowed

Zac to get it for a fraction of its true value. That thing alone might be what would allow him to evolve Verun to even greater heights in the future.

Besides, it was not like the more common weapons couldn't be upgraded. They just needed their own fortuitous encounters, just like cultivators did. So even if Verun was common, so what? It just put his axe on the same level as himself, a mortal.

It was only at the second to last section of the auction that Zac started to see things he was interested in on the list. The final 5 items were still obscured, but the 7th weapon was actually listed as a "One-of-a-kind" Shield. There were also multiple pills that would give large boosts to both improving race and opening Nodes.

Zac eagerly waited as the auctioneer sold off one item after another, until she finally arrived at one item that Zac was interested in.

"Next item might not be helpful during your stay inside the Tower of Eternity, but it is a must-have for when you return home triumphantly. It is the [Treasure Blood Pill] that will complete up to 15% of the Race upgrade for a general humanoid cultivator. It will even purify your blood, reducing the pill toxicity in your veins by a noticeable degree," the young Auctioneer said with a smile as she presented a crystalline vial.

"Pill Toxicity? What is that?" Zac asked with a frown.

Galau gave Zac a befuddled look, as though Zac asked what air was, but he still quickly answered.

"Most pills contain small amounts of impurities that the body is unable to break down. The more pills you eat the more it accumulates. The problem is that it is very hard to notice that there is a problem before it's too late. You won't lose any attribute points, but it might cause your Cosmic Energy to become a bit sluggish. But most importantly; it might affect your attempts at forming a Cultivation Core negatively," the man said with a hushed voice.

"Eating too many pills will essentially end your path of cultivation unless you deal with the crap," Ogras added.

"Are all pills like this?" Zac asked with a frown. "Even healing pills?"

"No, its just pills that improve your Dao, Race, or Levels that has this effect as far as I know," Galau said with a shake of his head.

"What about natural treasures?" Zac asked.

"They're borne by nature, so there's no residual toxicity," Galau said. "Instead they are often poisonous, and still require getting turned into pill before they can be used."

"So this pill is pretty good, even reducing the toxicity rather than increasing it?" Zac asked.

Galau looked back and forth before he leaned over and whispered.

"It's a sales trick," he said as quietly as possible. "Remember what she said? It removes toxicity from your blood, but she never said anything about removing it from the body."

Zac's eyes widened in understanding, feeling it was a bit lucky to have the experienced youngster to explain the pitfalls. If it wasn't for his warning he would have unhesitantly bought this thing after learning about pill toxicity, perhaps ready to buy it at a huge premium.

Just from hearing Galau's explanation he realized that Pill Toxicity would become another barrier for his future cultivation. He would be far more reliant on pills compared to normal cultivators, since the only other way for him to crack open nodes was to risk his body by forcing them open.

But now he learned that even the safer path was fraught with hidden danger. What if he managed to get all the way to peak E-Grade only to discover that his body had accumulated too much toxicity?