

The Fall 410

Chapter 410: Heartless

“Looking down on me, will you?” Ogras muttered to himself while cracking his neck as he moved toward the village. “I still remember you running around in a bloody dress like a lunatic.”

Ogras had seen the look in his eyes, and the words of caution had sounded like some elder cautioning children to not run too close to the Barghest pit.

Of course, Ogras knew that Zac’s remarks came from a place of concern, but it was a stark reminder that the gap between the two kept widening. It felt like there was an untapped and unceasing wellspring of potential inside that monster’s body, and if the man didn’t evolve soon he’d start fighting D-Grade Powerhouses.

Just a few months ago Ogras had still felt confident in defeating him if he went all out and utilized some underhanded tactics. But now? He didn’t even dare think about it. If Ogras wasn’t mistaken the guy actually possessed two Fragments now on top of his already monstrous body. And if that wasn’t enough he had enough Luck to bend reality around him in his favor.

Was the man the second coming of The First Defier? Would he also rip the heavens in two while still being a piddling mortal less than a hundred years old?

Ogras could only snort at his wild imagination and refocus on the task at hand. He had spoken with vigor just now, but he truly wasn’t completely confident in taking on this task. Judging by everything he knew of the trial he believed that the 3rd floor shouldn’t prove too difficult with his recent improvements, but he couldn’t be sure.

“I fed you so many good things you asshole, you better contribute to your daddy today,” Ogras muttered as he tapped the metal casing around his shadowlimb with his spear.

A subdued shudder made the metal cast hum for a bit, but Ogras couldn’t tell if the annoying critter living in his shadows agreed or not. But the thing hadn’t actively worked against him during battle at least, and it mostly seemed somewhat cooperative.

Now if it could only stop trying to possess him as well, then everything would be swell.

At least the creature came with some benefits now. Using the [Fruit of Bonding] had actually turned it into a registered companion, which was a lot better than the crude way that asshole had stitched their souls together. It even came with a small attribute bonus now, boosting both Dexterity and Intelligence.

Name

Ogras Azh'Rezak

Level

75

Class

[F-Rare] Shadowblade

Race

[E] Demon

Alignment

[Earth] Port Atwood

Manual

[F] Grey World Mudra [14%]

Titles

Demon Slayer I, Adventurer, Giantsbane, Disciple of David, Overpowered, Full of Class, Rarified Being, Tower of Eternity – 3rd floor, Betrayer, One Against Many, Butcher, Chosen of Dao, Invasion Breaker, The First Step, Beastmaster

Limited Titles

Astral Pond – 20m

Dao

Fragment of the Umbra - Early, Seed of Mirage - Middle

Companion

[F] Ka'Zur Planeswalker

Strength

272 [Increase: 8%. Efficiency: 100%]

Dexterity

541 [Increase: 23%. Efficiency: 105%]

Endurance

148 [Increase: 8%. Efficiency: 100%]

Vitality

99 [Increase: 8%. Efficiency: 100%]

Intelligence

108 [Increase: 13%. Efficiency: 100%]

Wisdom

69 [Increase: 8%. Efficiency: 100%]

Luck

49 [Increase: 8%. Efficiency: 100%]

Free Points

0

Nexus Coins

[F] 480 687 176

His title screen might not match up to that brute, but Ogras still felt a sense of accomplishment as he looked over his attributes. He had superseded even his most optimistic calculations by over 30%, mostly thanks to his Fragment and new titles.

He had even passed his dream-goal of hitting 500 Dexterity without eschewing his Strength in a bid to get a better class. Just the thought of evolution almost made his hand twitch in anticipation. He had kept himself from checking the crystal after the experience with the funnel, not wanting to let himself become complacent in this place.

The mediocre start to his path of cultivation would require a long time to correct, and he needed to eke out every advantage he could get. Upgrading his Tower Title was the first step, and next he needed to sniff out some Limited Titles to fill out his quota and boost his somewhat pitiful number of mid-grade Titles.

He was truthfully a bit surprised he hadn't heard of any leads on Earth. Had that odd Mystic Realm pushed aside all the smaller ones that usually globbed onto a newly integrated planet? It would be nice if they could get their hands on a Trial Array, like his family's Astral Pond. But the chances of that happening before they evolved were pretty slim.

Besides, such arrays could take years to set up, and even if MacKenzie had shown shocking skill with arrays it required deeper insights. He remembered that their pond had taken the ancestors 80 years to create after expending countless treasures.

It seemed unlikely he would gain any new titles before he evolved, but such was life. His vision had been broadened lately, but that didn't mean he could become greedy. Hopefully, Zac would get one as a reward by The Ruthless Heavens after gaining control of the whole baby planet.

Ogras threw a last look back at Zac and their mobile crystal mine before he went toward the barbarian camp. A large humanoid chieftain holding two massive scimitars walked out to meet him, and he only roared as he slammed the flat side against his bare chest, creating a sound that resembled the call of the Azh'Kir'Khat war drums.

"Hey there," Ogras hollered with a smile. "If you would be so kind to hand over your defining treasure then we'll be on our way!"

"You want to claim the Whisk of O'Chagga, stonewalker?" the man shouted. "The spirits won't allow such sacrilege!"

The demon could help but blanch at the corny situation, but the mention of the whisk made him perk up. Such a thing would obviously go to himself since he was the one who fought. Who knew? It might turn out to be something valuable.

And if not, perhaps it could be crushed and thrown into one of his vats. He had never drunk liquor infused with ancestral spirits, should be quite the experience.

But now was not the time to think of such matters. He had gained a lot lately, and it was time to put it to the test. This was not only a battle against the Tower or some dumb barbarian, it was a battle against himself. Against the version of himself who had cowed in the distance and who had only been able to look at a battle of this caliber with jealousy.

The ground suddenly rumbled, and Ogras looked over with a frown to see a large tiger rush over, each leap taking it over twenty meters forward. Had that god damn barbarian actually tricked him? That posturing with slamming his blades was actually to call his mount?

Shadowspears immediately rose out of the ground to skewer the animal while a few also shot toward the barbarian's eyes in an effort to distract him. The appearance of some prehistoric beast was an unwelcome addition to an already tense situation, and Ogras wanted to deal with it as quickly as possible.

The reflexes of the beast were nothing to scoff at though, and a few frenzied swipes destroyed most of the spears, with only a few managing to create shallow wounds in its flank. Ogras tsked in annoyance when he saw the tiger successfully join the barbarian who jumped onto its back.

"The treachery of a stonewalker, as expected," the barbarian roared, a line of green blood running down his face from a wound to his left cheek.

Ogras didn't bother answering as he immediately infused Cosmic Energy into the large fractal covering his shoulder blades. There was no point in holding back against his enemy, and he decided to activate [Grey World Arbiter] immediately.

It would be a bit embarrassing if he fought a long and arduous battle on the third floor after talking big and wide. It would make him look like a wastrel that ran his mouth based on someone else's strength. The two large wings grew out from the fractals and he felt power entering his body as he rose to the sky, and he immediately launched a barrage of shadows at his landbound foe.

"Coward!" the barbarian roared when he saw Ogras move outside the reach of his beast.

Ogras snickered as he infused his spear with shadows to launch a [Shadowlance], but he barely had time to start the infusion before a storm of wind blades rippled toward him as the chieftain frenziedly swung his two scimitars in front of him.

The blades were a bit reminiscent of Zac's axe-blades, but they were extremely thin and had a pale yellow hue that resembled the long dried stalks of grass covering the plains they stood on. The blades flew toward him with pretty annoying speed, and worse yet was that the attacks acted just like blades of grass in a storm, swaying back and forth in an unpredictable manner.

But Ogras had no problems playing that game. Darkness swallowed him as he activated [Darkside] to enter the Grey World, allowing him to move with a speed that almost seemed like teleportation to outsiders. He flashed back and forth, but he felt his connection with the Grey World weakening.

It seemed that the vast plains' connection to the grey world was pretty weak, which wasn't surprising with the lack of permanent shadows due to the even terrain. But it was enough for him to move behind him the chieftain, and he immediately launched a strike toward the nape of the man's neck.

Hitting the head increased the likelihood of a lethal strike as it was a larger target, but a head could be swung away with a wider arc than the neck itself. But the panther's muscles rippled the moment Ogras appeared, and the two moved away with shocking speed, barely avoiding the lance of condensed shadows that ripped through the air.

"Ancestors!" the chieftain roared as he looked at Ogras with some fear in his eyes for the first time, and the air above him shuddered.

A massive, but hazy, projection of a warrior wielding a spear condensed above him, and it emanated a pressure that even superseded the warrior himself. Ogras groaned in annoyance as he watched the huge man turn his spear toward him.

Cultivators relying on ancestral protection were pretty annoying, as they had the ability to call on their long-dead ancestors. As more old goats died over the years the ancestral spirits only got stronger, making the current chieftains harder and harder to deal with.

Luckily such classes were pretty rare in the multiverse as there were hefty downsides to this system. Venerating your ancestors to this degree put mental blocks in your mind, making them gods and yourself a mortal. Surpassing them became almost impossible, which created gradually declining bloodlines.

Besides, such cultivation systems had other weaknesses as well. Ogras' mouth widened in a bloodthirsty smile as the straps holding his cast together snapped open and the metallic container fell to the ground.

A massive sea of shadows spread across the grassy fields, washing out the colors in the area. But Ogras didn't instruct the shadows to head toward the massive guardian in the sky, but rather created a grey tsunami that rippled toward the small village to the side.

"You!" the chieftain roared in anger, and the whole area shook as the fury of the ancestor ignited.

Screams from children could be heard from the village as weak shields were erected by warriors who had stood by to witness the battle of their chief and spiritual pillar. But the expressions in their eyes indicated they didn't hold much confidence in rebuffing the storm of shadows that threatened to consume the whole village.

The huge projection in the air suddenly exploded in a flash of yellow light, and a massive shield sprung up around the village that easily rebuffed the wave of shadows. It was like the sea of shadows tried to swallow a sun, but the blinding light quickly drained the shadows of their strength, destroying most and forcing the rest to flee.

The ancestral guardian had sacrificed his form to keep his descendants safe, while the air around the chieftain distorted as he seemed to charge up a massive attack directed at Ogras who sneered at him from a safe distance.

A pitch-black arm suddenly emerged from the chest of the chieftain, holding a still-beating heart in its hand. The Ogras who hovered in the air slowly faded, as the true Ogras rose out of the chieftain's

shadows. The mount roared in anger when it sensed the fate of its master on its back, but a massive explosion from the shadows beneath blasted open the panther's belly, spreading its innards all over the ground.

The Seed of Mirage and some misdirection had allowed him to launch a quick strike to end it all, and the massive collision of energies had distracted the sharp senses of the panther for long enough to move himself and his explosive array close enough to strike.

"Relying...on.. despicable tactics... heartless," the man coughed out as his mouth filled with blood.

"Perhaps, but I am alive and you are dead," Ogras smiled as he crushed the heart and released a burst of shadows that rampaged inside the body of the dying warrior, instantly killing him.

"If the Heavens are heartless, why shouldn't I be the same?"