

The Fall 416

Chapter 416: Bravoria Goods and Treasures

Zac's eyes lit up as he accepted the token. He knew that he would have to leave Earth sooner or later if he wanted to keep improving, and the Allbright Empire was his first choice. First of all, he had multiple connections there, and there seemed to be all kinds of places where he could grind monsters to his heart's content.

He could even join the same army as Average since it sounded like it was an army that was constantly in battle with the various threats at the border of the Red Zone.

"Wait, Nal Avadar? Not Beroria?" Zac suddenly asked with a start.

"Well, most of us aren't comfortable divulging our real heritage in the Base Town," Galau said with an apologetic smile.

"Ah, I understand," Zac said with a pang of guilt as he did the same thing.

"However, you might not want to use the token depending on how things turn out after we exit," Galau added.

"Do you think your clan will be implicated by my actions here?" Zac asked with worry.

"Our family has fought for The Allbright Empire for over 800 000 years, and many of our ancestors have racked up great merit in the army. The Empire wouldn't allow us to be exterminated over a feud among juniors, especially since I was not directly involved," Galau explained. "But some elder might want to present you to the Tsarun for private benefits if they believe they can get away with it."

"So you're gifting him a deathtrap?" Ogras snorted.

"This token takes him to the city Teleporter, not our family's private one," Galau explained. "He can simply identify himself as a wandering cultivator, no? Besides. If the Peak Family speaks up for you, then no one in our family would dare to have any malicious ideas."

Zac wasn't too sure about the last statement. Greed could make people do all types of despicable things, and there was no doubt in his mind that some elders in Galau's family wouldn't hesitate to sell him out if given the opportunity.

However, what Galau said was true. He could simply go there using [Thousand Faces] and immediately leave for the Red sector if things looked dicey with Galau's family. Securing passage would likely be a bit cumbersome, but there was no way that there weren't solutions in an established Empire like that.

"Thank you," Zac repeated. "We'll see you in a couple of months. Have fun over here."

With that they left their companion of the last month to live it up among the armadillo-people as they stepped onto the teleporter.

Galau watched his two companions disappear after stepping onto the teleporter, a surprising amount of wistfulness filling his heart.

“Such a bad actor,” Galau muttered with a small smile before he walked over to a particular pile of rubble in the cavern.

Well, subsidizing the demon a decent talisman in return for the goodwill of Zac Piker felt like an extremely worthy investment. As long as that man survived the aftermath of the Zethaya incident then all would be fine. He had been a bit despondent at the start, but after thinking it over Galau quickly realized the opportunity that had presented itself before him.

The resources he had put into garnering trust and camaraderie would turn into a massive leg to hug onto in a millennium, or perhaps even in just a few centuries. Monstrous attributes that hadn’t been seen since who knows when? Dual Fragments? And he’s a Progenitor with connections to the Peak family? Zac Piker even had a good chance of outperforming Prince Reoluv. What was a little talisman compared to that?

Besides, he had ample time to make up for the expenditure in the coming months.

The excitement of excavating unknown treasure filled Galau’s heart as he pushed the rubble away, displaying a hole full of Cosmic Sacks. If you added the spatial tools he pilfered from the dead merchants when they arrived at the floor, then this might be the most profitable one yet.

Galau quickly transferred all the loot from the Bandit’s cosmos Sacks before he started walking back toward the town. He hadn’t been idle while the demon had been busy hunting bandits, and he quickly moved toward a shop at the edge of the settlement. A human merchant ran it, and the store was empty as usual when Galau entered.

“Whad’ya want?” the old man muttered with disinterest, but his eyes widened in fear when Galau threw out a handful of array crystals without warning.

The whole store was locked down in an instant, allowing neither sound nor people to escape. The merchant hastily produced a talisman of his own, but how couldn’t Galau be prepared?

The merchant lay prone on the floor snoring before he even had time to activate his defenses. Galau quickly dragged him to a corner in the basement and poured a black tincture down his throat. It would keep in a coma for up to a year without a problem, which was more than enough.

The merchant wasn’t well-liked and he had no kin in the town. Him disappearing and being replaced by a much more affable merchant shouldn’t result in any waves, and the mystery of his appearance would deter would-be troublemakers.

With lodging secured Galau could finally do what he had longed for the past weeks. One treasure after another started spilling out of his Cosmos Sacks, and he started to go over them one by one with an almost manic gleam in his eyes.

It hadn’t been easy stashing away so much loot under the nose of that paranoid demon, but he still had managed to hide away a pretty impressive haul over 30 levels. After having mentioned his warrior heritage and his goals of being a merchant neither Zac nor Ogras had suspected him to have not one but four skills related to thievery, all of which he had used on the locals on each level any chance he got.

Now he only needed to turn this wealth into more wealth over the coming two months, and finally convert it all to Nexus Coins before he left.

After Galau rearranged the store to be more inviting and added his own wares he went out and took out a large sign that he had already prepared. One swing with his massive zweihander was all that was needed to strike down the old one, and the scene would hopefully create enough buzz to spread the news of the new store.

As expected, it took less than ten minutes before the first patron arrived, and the little armadillo's eyes widened when he saw all the exotic wares on display. Galau adorned an affable but somewhat timid smile as he scurried toward the mark.

“Welcome esteemed patron, to Bravoria Goods and Treasures. I am sure you’ll find something to your liking!”

Life was pretty good, all things considered.

After the brief intermission Zac found himself standing on a craggy surface adorned with thick moss and a sparse number of trees here and there. It reminded him of the Scottish moorlands he had seen in movies, but he barely had time to orient himself as a heavy shockwave almost made him lose his footing.

It felt like an earthquake, but it only lasted for an instant, making Zac more inclined to believe that there was a massive battle between two powerhouses somewhere closeby. It might be a clue to this level if he could figure out the source and there was clearly a link as the quest prompt appeared immediately following the phenomenon.

[Redirect the Ancestral Avoli from its current path]

Zac’s eyes almost crossed in confusion as he read the mission. Redirect the what? And where?

Another shake almost made Zac fall over, and he looked around for the source of the abrupt earthquakes. But he couldn’t see anything out of the norm.

A red flare rose into the sky far in the distance, and Zac put his questions aside as he immediately set out to find the demon.

As expected the first attack took place within seconds. A disgusting critter as large as a wolf appeared out from a hidden burrow and threw itself right at Zac, who bisected it without even thinking. Zac wasn't exactly sure whether it was a bug or a beast even after observing the corpse. It looked a bit like a naked molerat, but it had eight legs and insectoid eyes, and pincers in its mouth rather than teeth.

The beast also wasn't alone, as more of them quickly appeared out of burrows all over, and Zac found himself in a protracted battle where he had to run and fight simultaneously. The critters were luckily not even as strong as the Battleroaches, and the unceasing number of them only turned into more Nexus Coins for him.

Zac soon enough found the demon with hundreds of carcasses around him, and more animals joined their fallen brethren every second as one spear after another skewered them from below.

“Oh, you’re here?” the demon noted. “Help me finish off these ugly things.”

The two went to work and within five minutes the area was strewn with thousands of the small beasts. The animals gave a decent clue about their mission as well, as they were called [Avoli Parasites], meaning they had some connection to their target.

"Did you know about those rules?" Zac asked when things had calmed down, referring to the limits to traveling together.

"Of course I knew," Ogras snorted. "Since when was the Ruthless Heavens so generous that it would provide top tier treasures and amazing titles to leeches? Allowing us to travel together for almost half the tower is benevolent enough. I simply wanted to squeeze out a bonus on top of the Nexus Coins."

"Then why didn't you split off from us on the third floor?" Zac asked.

"Well, I knew most of it," Ogras coughed. "I honestly thought that it would be possible to get help all through the fourth floor. I would enter the teleporter to the fifth floor separately, and that way get the maximum benefits. I guess it backfired a bit, but it's not the end of the world."

"So what will you do?" Zac probed.

"I'll sponge off for you for the levels of the fourth floor, but I will fight the floor guardian by myself," the demon answered without hesitation.

"The guardian still has the boosted attributes of three people though," Zac reminded.

"The fourth floor is breached a couple of times every week in our sector. The experiences on your planet have given me enough strength to match most scions. Why wouldn't I be able to defeat it if I use my head?" the demon proudly said.

Zac was about to argue, but he realized that what Ogras said might be true. The demon had produced a Dao Fragment along with another Dao Seed that seemed to be related to illusions judging by the fight with the barbarian chieftain. This alone put him in the top percentile of those who visited the Tower.

Let alone the fourth floor, Ogras might actually have a decent chance at the fifth floor unless the difficulty took an unprecedented leap.

"I understand," Zac said as his eyes started to turn pitch-black. "We can go over things properly on the 35th level."

"Ugh, creepy," Ogras said with a grimace as he witnessed Zac change into his Draugr-form. "I'll never get used to those eyes of yours. Couldn't wait even a second after we ditched the dead weight?"

"I've been itching to try some things out for a while now," Zac said with a smile that no doubt looked creepy rather than mirthful in his current shape. "Hopefully we'll find some targets that will do."

"Well, there seems to be no lack of targets in this place at least," the demon agreed.

"What do you think of the quest? Have you heard of Ancestral Avolis before?" Zac probed as he took out his new and almost unused shield.

"No, but I think we're standing on him," the demon said as he poked his spear into the ground a few times.

Realization immediately dawned in Zac's eyes, but he still felt a bit skeptical as he looked around. There were massive vistas in all directions, so if they were actually standing on a beast it would have to be as big as his island.

"There are beasts as large as planets swimming around the vast cosmos, so why not ones as large as mountains?" the demon shrugged with disinterest when he saw Zac's face. "I'm more interested in how we redirect a big bastard like this."

Zac's scrambled for ideas as well, but there was only one doable solution he could think of.

"If we find the equivalent of this guy's brain we might be able to give him a shock great enough to turn," Zac ventured.

"Sounds as good as any other plan," the demon agreed. "We can just blast the brain into mush if it doesn't work. I guess that this thing is the target as well."

"Probably," Zac nodded.

It might seem preposterous to kill something as large as an island, but it didn't seem too hard to Zac. They had already done something similar with the Ayr Hivequeen. They were essentially ants to this thing and could freely make their way into its body to cause havoc. It wasn't like this huge thing could stop them either, just like Zac couldn't stop bacteria from running around inside his body.

It took the two some time to orient themselves, but they soon managed to confirm the hypothesis that they were standing on an enormous beast. The Ancestral Avoli had eight legs, each like a mountain of its own, and an oblong body. They were somewhere in the middle, and they figured its head was in the direction the Avoli moved, so they quickly set out.

They found nothing of value on the beast itself, just a bunch of beasts living off of the body of the titan. The bodies of the parasites were worthless as well, and they only served as target practice. But that was just fine with Zac as he had been itching to fight in his Draugr-form for a while.

It was finally time to test his new skills.