

## The Fall 482

### Chapter 482: Love's Bond

Zac didn't immediately leave the mansion though, but rather gave some of his best healing pills to Thea. He was about to leave her room to visit Billy as well, and Thea surprisingly jumped down from her bed to join him. The giant was even worse off than Thea from what she said.

He had taken the brunt of the attacks after changing into massive form to sink the ship, and this time Zac hadn't been there to block out the attacks with [Nature's Barrier] like during the hunt. Billy had been badly burned by the flames of the cultists it seemed.

It was easy to figure out with room the giant resided in as the whole room shook from the massive snores from within, but they stopped when Zac walked into the room.

"You're back!" Billy rumbled as he woke up. "Help Billy a bit! A stupid horny guy keeps tricking Billy, making him forget how to leave this place! All horny people seems tricky, could use a good thwonkin'."

"Don't let your fans hear that," Thea snorted from the side as she walked inside as well, prompting Zac to look over with confusion.

"He has over thirty suitors among the Demons on this island," Thea said with some bemusement. "It's a bit surreal."

"Of course it is super real. Billy is the most dashing prince, Mama always said so," Billy nodded with a complacent expression. "But Billy doesn't like horny girls."

"Uh, you should just call them Demons," Zac coughed, the anger in his gut somewhat dispersed by the giant's antics.

He couldn't stay for too long though, and he had to leave after making sure Thea and Billy had everything they needed.

"I'm sorry about how things turned out. I underestimated the Undead Empire and put too much trust in the words of Void's Disciple. I was sure I had a few more weeks," Zac apologized again just as he was about to exit.

"It's our fault as well," Thea sighed as she sat down next to Billy. "We didn't adapt quickly enough to this new reality, forcing the whole burden onto your shoulders. We played politics and fought for benefits when we should have been fighting for our lives and our futures."

Zac sighed as well, not knowing how to respond, and he left the mansion in silence.

"You really are evolving?" a voice said from the side, and Zac looked over to see Ogras standing there.

"I am," Zac nodded before he wryly smiled. "Did you know that Billy is pretty popular among the female demons?"

"Well, it makes sense. He's even bulkier than the Abyssal Demons, and rumors are circulating on the island that he has some powerful bloodline that increased his strength even further," the demon

shrugged. "Between his constitution and his potential, he's one of the best bachelors on this world, perhaps even better than you since you're a mortal."

Zac only shook his head in bemusement before he got back to the matter at hand.

"I need to take down the Undead Incursion quickly. Do you think I can do it without evolving?" Zac asked as the two walked toward his private section.

"It's hard to say," the demon said after a while. "Normally I would have said yes, but we're running out of time. The Lich King seems adept at arrays judging by what we have seen so far, and he has no doubt turned the core zone into a fortress over the past year. He doesn't even need to maintain the shield for that long, just a few days will do and he will have won."

"You really think his arrays are that strong?" Zac asked skeptically. "I even managed to break the arrays in the Base Town."

"That's different, those were mobile arrays powered by F-Grade warriors," Ogras said with a shake of his head. "The undead array will have hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Unholy Beacons powering it. He might even sacrifice tens of millions of Zombies to give the defenses a boost until the realignment is complete."

"Still," Zac muttered, but he knew the demon had a point.

"Sieges can take years, decades even, to slowly grind down the defensive arrays, and that's with proper equipment we don't have. You need to be a lot stronger to crack them in an instant," the demon said. "The normal method would have been for us to bring millions of fodder to blast attacks on the shield to weaken it before we made our move. But there's no time for that either."

Zac slowly nodded. He had somewhat hoped for the demon to convince him otherwise, but it truly looked like he needed to get a few power-ups to increase his certainty of success. He wasn't willing to bet Earth's future that he was able to break through the defensive perimeters and destroy the realignment array within one week without evolving.

"Where's my sister?" Zac asked. "Has she installed the array?"

"She's still trying to figure out the thing," Ogras said. "But you need to slow down."

"What? You know we're running out of time," Zac said.

"Just a few hours have passed since you exited the tower. You have fought half the Sector's geniuses and then fended off the invasions. You even turned Alea into a heaven-cursed necklace. You're not stable at the moment, you can't evolve in your current state," the demon said. "Honestly, if you were the scion of some clan you would probably have been forced into silent meditation for at least year to regain a sense of tranquility and balance."

"So you just want me to sit around?" Zac said with disbelief. "The planet is dying as we speak."

"We are all dying," the demon snorted. "Don't ruin everything now by rushing into things. Sit down and heal up and calm your mind at least. A few hours spent now will save you a lot of time in the long run."

Zac was somewhat unwilling, but he knew that the demon was right. He wasn't in his right mind at the moment, and he needed to cool off. But he still felt like a child who got sent to take his nap as he walked back to his courtyard and sat down.

His thoughts were a whirl as he tried to calm down, and his mind kept jumping between the various things that needed his attention, each more urgent than the last. But slowly circulating the Fragment of the Bodhi helped him relax his tense muscles, and his thoughts slowly followed. Visiting the Tower of Eternity was supposed to give him a breather to decompress, but things had gone increasingly out of hand with the Splinter and then the time crunch to complete the climb.

He felt more wound up than ever, especially after what he went through with Alea.

His eyes slowly opened and he looked down at the black 5-centimeter casket hanging on its chain around his neck. He still didn't know whether he had done the right thing or not. What if he had completely damned Alea by turning her into something like the Sword Slave he had snatched from the swordmaster? The voices that had invaded his mind while using the thing had sounded beyond wretched.

The one solace in his mind was that the System had said that the [Divine Investiture Array] was a rectification of regret.

If Alea had died in front of his eyes like that, then he would have regretted it forever. To be just too late to save her not just once, but twice would have been too much to take. The System was essentially omniscient and perhaps it had already known that things would end up like this. It did make him a bit pissed off that the System didn't provide a better solution to save her, but he guessed the System was more interested in making him stronger than it was in saving the poison mistress.

However, his actions had no doubt caused some complications to his plans. A lot of his materials had gone into the [Divine Investiture Array] in his frenzied attempts to save the demoness. It also meant that he no longer had any way to upgrade his axe, except letting it slowly eat various treasures. Of course, most items meant for Verun had gone to Alea, but he at least had the Dragon Core still.

The real question was what sort of item that he had created. He had initially just been focused on saving Alea's soul, but the array was meant to create a perfect Spirit Tool. This became doubly important as [Everlasting] had been thrown into the mix, leaving him without anything to activate half of his skills.

It might even affect his coming Class choices for all he knew, so he needed to understand what he was dealing with.

He tried sending his mind into the coffin to see if he could glean anything, but it was impossible. Zac suddenly had an idea and released a drop of blood onto the necklace, which was immediately swallowed.

A stream of information immediately entered his mind as he felt the same sort of connection as he did to his robes and [Verun's Bite]. He couldn't help but feel a sense of sourness when he realized that either Alea or the System had named the chain-covered coffin [Love's Bond].

There was still no active response from the demoness even after having bound the treasure with his blood. The coffin was still in a "passive" state like his robes, where he could use it but he couldn't sense

any Spirit Tool's sapience. This was the norm for an E-Grade Spirit Tool though, with the tool awakening Spirituality usually happened at higher grades, if ever.

However, the stream of information had broadened his insight of what a spirit tool could do, and a mental command made two chains rush out from the holes on the side of the coffin and latch onto his left arm as the coffin rapidly grew in size.

It took just a fraction of a second before the coffin had become almost as tall as Zac himself while keeping the width of a normal coffin. But it was a lot thinner compared to what should be expected, with a depth of just 15 centimeters. It had actually turned into a shield.

However, that was just one of its functions, and another mental command prompted the chains to snake around his torso as the coffin moved toward his back. It grew a lot shorter as well, making it almost resemble a coffin for a child or perhaps a gnome.

Four more chains reached out from their respective holes, each of them dancing in the air as though Zac was a snake charmer. He was already used to this kind of fighting from the chains in [Profane Seal], and commanding them was almost as natural as moving his own limbs. The chains shot out in an instant, and four trees in his courtyard had holes punched through with such force that they barely shuddered before the chains had passed through.

The chains didn't have the life-sucking abilities of the spectral chains, but there seemed to be some inherently corrosive effect attached to them, perhaps an addition provided from the mysterious fossilized bug he had thrown into the mix. It wasn't immediately noticeable, but the holes in the trees started to wither after a few seconds as well like they were being assaulted by some sort of invasive rot.

Furthermore, the chains were actual corporeal links made by top-tier materials like Neprosium, compared to the far more fragile fractal chains that his skill conjured. There was no way that a casual swing of an E-Grade warrior would be able to break them apart as they could do with the spectral copies.

That meant that the chains were essentially a combination or fusion of hardness and rot, which made them a perfect fit for using together with the Fragment of the Coffin.

However, Zac didn't take the time to experiment with all the possibilities of the chains at the moment, so he retracted them back into the coffin. He was extremely relieved that there was a second form of Alea's new form since he was somewhat leery about using the coffin in its shield-state. What if he encountered some powerhouse that managed to break it? What effect would it have on his chances of restoring her to her demon form?

The chains themselves looked like his Neprosium shield but slightly darker, so they wouldn't break so easily. Besides, Neprosium had excellent healing capabilities even if that happened. The chains would probably just reform if the links broke as long as he retrieved the material.

It still felt weird to consider using Alea as a Spirit Tool, but he also knew that was what she wished for. At least he prayed that was what that wordless spiritual connection meant. She wanted to accompany him in his journey, and leaving her in a corner of his Spatial Ring felt even worse than using the treasure.

He would need some time to think of the pitch-black coffin as [Love's Bond] rather than Alea, but he would make the best of the situation. Besides, that might be his best shot at actually getting the poison mistress back.

Zac had asked about Spirit Tool upgrades while talking to Catheya since they had broached the subject when discussing the [Divine Investiture Array]. Much of what she said hadn't been anything new, but one thing had stuck out. Using the same weapon a lot and for a long time gradually formed a bond that was helpful in all kinds of ways.

It would allow a warrior to squeeze out more potential during a battle, and it would even help with upgrading the Spirit Tool. That was why most elites wanted a powerful weapon that could follow them during their whole Cultivation Path, rather than repeatedly swapping out their weapon for a stronger one. Nurturing this bond was the same as nurturing the Spirit Tool, so using the coffin in battle might actually be the best method to heal her soul, odd as it might sound.

A chain snaked around his throat as the coffin shrunk again, and it soon enough had returned to its passive state. Zac finally tried imbuing the Spirit Tool with his three fragments, but he found that the coffin, unsurprisingly, resisted the Fragment of the Axe. Imbuing it with the Fragment of the Bodhi worked, but he couldn't sense any direct effect when doing so.

But when he tried imbuing the skill with the final Fragment he was shocked. The surprise didn't come from the fact that the defensive fragment entered the Spirit Tool effortlessly. After all, if the Dao of the Coffin didn't fit this Spirit Tool, then nothing would. The surprise came from something else.

The Fragment of the Coffin had evolved.