

The Fall 516

Chapter 516: Beastcrafting

Miasma spread out through Zac's body as he activated his Specialty Core. He walked over to the Death-Attuned side once more and took out a large tub that he filled with water before he threw in a dozen E-Grade Miasma Crystals. Next were a handful of stalks of Netherbloom, along with various other herbs that he had found in the Cosmos Sack left on the body of Adriel.

It was time to work on his Race once more.

He had already used up the [Fruit of Rebirth] the moment he returned to Port Atwood, and the massive amount of progress made on his racial upgrade allowed him to realize a somewhat surprising with his body. His nodes were the same between his Races, but his actual Races were separate.

Zac had somewhat figured that his Racial Rank would be shared between his two sides as he only had one body and because his two classes shared the same Node System. However, that wasn't the case. He could clearly feel that his Human side was on the cusp of evolving into D-Grade, whereas his Undead Side barely had improved at all.

That was starting to become an extremely urgent issue now that his third Dao Fragment had evolved. Even worse, the insight had been partly based on protection, which had caused the Fragment to boost Endurance more than expected. One more breakthrough and he might actually hit the Attribute limit on his undead side.

Of course, Zac had already tried to remedy the situation by eating the remaining Racial Upgrade Pills he bought at the Base Town Auctions, but he had almost killed himself doing so. It turned out his Draugr side was extremely picky, and the pills that humans would use were essentially poison to him.

Triv was no use either. It could barely confirm that the Undead used various methods of improving races. For example, they created incense sticks using herbs, where the composition depended on what race the original body was. There were also the standard medicinal baths according to Triv, but its helpfulness ended there.

The ghost was unable to divulge a single mixture, as his commandments apparently regarded that as betraying the Undead Empire. However, the ghost didn't have any issues at all mixing up a medicinal bath following a recipe that Zac provided, proving there were loopholes to the limitations. Unfortunately, the same issue arose with the normal medicinal baths; they didn't work on his undead side either.

Zac had no idea what would happen if he passed the attribute cap as things stood. Would both his classes lose out on points? Or would his Draugr alone take the hit? Zac really wasn't willing to find out, and he was doing everything he could to stave off that ever happening.

He had no idea how things came to this. He had specifically asked about race upgrades while visiting the Undead Kingdom inside the Tower of Eternity, but he heard no clues about his current predicament. He had been afraid that he would need a Lich to help him upgrade his race to D-Grade as they were responsible for giving Revenants sapience, but that thankfully wasn't the case.

They had assured him that cultivation and treasures would work just fine, but the care package they had provided him with hadn't contained anything to improve his constitution. Perhaps they expected his 'master' or elders to have prepared far superior materials for him already and felt it would almost be an insult to give him their scraps.

The freezing bath he had concocted was just a stopgap measure as he was all out of ideas. The dense death-attuned waters along with random herbs from Adriel's Cosmos Sack did help a bit, but properly preparing a medicinal bath was far more complicated than what he was haphazardly throwing together. It required precise measurements of the different herbs, and they needed to be processed and added in a certain manner.

Using it as he did was essentially wasting over 95% of the efficacy, and he would run out of herbs long before he upgraded his race at this pace. He was rapidly burning money for very little gain. The [Void Heart] was no use for upgrading his Race either, but rather the opposite. It just stole some of the energies of the medicinal baths and fed it into the node in his leg, leaving a bunch of impurities in his bloodstream.

He did get small amounts of refined energies from the Shard of Creation though, but he had no idea if that mysterious energy actually helped with his race, or if it had some other sort of effect on his body.

He had already sent Valkyries and Demons to look for manuals or clues in the ruins of his newly acquired Death Fort, but he didn't hold out much hope. Zac knew he most likely already was in possession of the recipes anyway, locked away inside the crystals of the Lich King. But those were still out of his reach, as even the old Sky Gnome had failed in cracking their protections no matter what he or his little pet tried.

He felt as though he was falling into the same old predicament as last time. He had managed to improve his constitution a small bit, but he didn't know how much his attribute cap had increased as a result. His Strength had already passed his Endurance by now, and it felt like the tragedy of the F-Grade cap could take place again at any moment.

But he also knew he needed to keep pushing himself forward. Inevitability was level 111 by now, and Void's Disciple was level 108. Zac still felt that the older Zhix warrior was a far larger threat compared to the unhinged maniac he battled during the Hunt. He felt pretty confident in dealing with Inevitability if they met again today, but he was far less certain about the Dominator Leader.

He had given him Zac an extremely oppressive and mysterious feeling when they met, and Zac had no clue exactly what skills he had. The Zhix Hordes had no idea either; everyone who had seen Void's Disciple in action had been killed. He was like a murderous ghost that moved back and forth across the hives.

Zac knew that catching him was impossible, even though he still coordinated with the Zhix Armies to track his movements. He had somehow opened up a rift in space and walked straight through it when they met, and the Lich King had indicated that Void's Disciple actually had gained the Dao of Space. How was he supposed to catch someone like that?

Even if Zac found him and started fighting, he could still just slink away if he started losing.

The best solution was taking him on inside the Mystic Realm, and Julia would hopefully return with good news today. Until then he needed to do what he could to improve his power, even if it meant him wasting mountains of precious herbs.

Zac only stepped out of the vat two hours later, and he swapped back to his human form immediately. A knife appeared in his right hand as he cut a deep wound across his forearm. Ice cold blood spurted out for a few seconds until his extreme Vitality closed the wound, but Zac repeated the process a few times to release well over two liters of blood.

His makeshift medicine baths did have some effect on his Draugr race, but it also came with a huge amount of impurities that the [Void Heart] puked out into his bloodstream. Just one bath meant he would have to bleed himself for a few more times over the coming day, and there was also the impurities from the Soul Strengthening session to deal with.

The lackluster results of his racial upgrade had somewhat put a damper on the excitement of upgrading his Dao Fragment, and Zac sighed with annoyance as he left his cultivation cave. He teleported back to his compound, but he didn't immediately head over to his Courtyard. Instead, he left the small number of mansions behind and entered the wilderness.

He walked for two minutes until he appeared in a secluded spot hidden deep in his private forest. It was actually a place that held some significance to him; it was the very spot where he woke up after the integration.

However, the small glade was completely unrecognizable by now, with its bloodroot and cardinals replaced with a sanguine pond with a diameter of five meters. Even Zac felt a bit pressured as he walked next to the pond of Dragon Blood, and he felt that he could even hear distant roars. The pressure no doubt came from the Dragon's bloodline, as it felt similar to the pressure that he had felt during his fight with the primordial beast.

The pond had shrunk a bit since his last visit, which surprised Zac as that was the third time. He still topped the pond off with more Dragon blood from one of his vats, realizing he was would run in a week if things kept up like this. However, he had no direct usage for the blood anyway, and he felt it was best used like this.

He also threw in a few more Beast Crystals for good measure as he couldn't sense the unique energy fluctuations from the previous ones he threw in. He didn't know if he was simply wasting money, but Verun had seemed to like them any time he got close to one. A sense of anticipation gripped Zac's heart as looked at the large crystal sticking out in the middle of the pond.

It was the latest transformation of [Verun's Bite]. The Spirit Tool had been pushed hard in the latest fights against the Lich King and the elites of the Tower of Eternity. He honestly wasn't confident that the weapon would be able to keep up for the coming fights, and this was his best bet unless he actually chose to swap it out for a new axe.

That's why he chose to feed it the Dragon Core the moment he returned to Port Atwood, though he still kept the Bloodline Marrow for himself. The weapon had immediately turned into a crystal like the previous time it underwent massive changes, but it had still sent out a mental plea for more Dragon blood.

It still looked there would be some time before the evolution finished, and Zac was extremely eager to see the result. Zac hoped that the primordial bloodline of the Dragon along with the Beast Crystals would cause some equivalent of a Bloodline Evolution of Verun.

It didn't really work like that for normal Spirit Tools as far as he knew, but it was possible for Beastcrafted weapons according to Triv. Bloodline evolutions were obviously a pretty impressive boost to the potential power such Spirit Tools could exhibit, but beast crafted weapons had downsides as well.

First of all, their upgrade ceiling was generally low to start with. Secondly, they were a lot pickier for upgrade components compared to normal weapons, and two seemingly identical weapons could have completely different requirements. The latter in particular was a big reason why pretty much all weapons he had seen at the Base Town were made from metals, wood, or crystal.

They were simpler to evolve, and the upgrade paths were generally a lot clearer. No one wanted to risk being stuck with a weapon that couldn't evolve any longer, forcing them to get a new weapon instead. One's weapon was a huge component of your combat prowess, after all, and it was impossible to immediately exhibit one's full strength after changing weapons.

But Zac didn't really have either desire or the ability to swap out his axe to a better one, and his eyes were locked at the pupa as he conjured all kinds of possibilities in his mind. Zac only spent a couple of minutes by the pond though before he got ready to leave, a crack echoed out across the glade just as he turned away.

Zac's eyes lit up in anticipation as the red crystal crumbled bit by bit, slowly showcasing the weapon hidden within. A sudden shockwave blasted the crystal to pieces though, and an enormous shape appeared by the pool as the blood was sucked into the weapon.

It was Verun, who still looked like an oversized ancestor of a hyena, apart from his massively oversized maw and multiple sets of eyes. Zac had almost thought he would turn into a half-dragon or something after eating the core, but its changes were a lot more subtle than that. Its fur had turned from a dusty brown to a glossy black, with red highlights covering its body.

It almost looked like he had scales, but a second glance showed that it was just a pattern. It had also grown a thick mane that ran from its head all the way down to its short tail, somewhat reminding Zac of the spikes of the black dragon he fought. Its claws had changed as well, turning bigger and darker.

Its whole image had turned more refined, without losing its aura of lethality. There was a sense of sharpness and danger to it, like it was a true predator that didn't only use its brawns to take down its enemies.

Finally, there were streams of energy that circulated each of its four legs, and a glance with [Cosmic Gaze] displayed two swirls just above its paws, both with a different color. The first one was had a sanguine hue, which wasn't surprising as its favorite food had always been blood. The other one was a bit more surprising though.

The second swirl was felt like was steely gray and felt pretty similar to his Fragment of the Axe, though the Heaviness was swapped out by something else. Force maybe? In either case, it thankfully wasn't fire-related, something Zac had worried would happen from ingesting a Dragon Core.

Dragon Flames were obviously powerful, but not something that suited Zac's current path. So the fact that the addition felt element-neutral was a relief. The massive beast looked down at Zac from the other side of the pool, happiness radiating through their mental bond. It raised its head and let out a massive roar the next moment. The terrifying cry was powerful enough to cause the closest trees to shake, and even Zac had to take a step back from the volume.

Birds screeched in panic in the distance, and Zac wouldn't be surprised if the whole town heard the roar. It felt like the Verun wanted the whole world to know there was a new alpha in town.