

The Fall 519

Chapter 519: Cleanse

Zac already knew there were some natives living inside the Mystic Realm since long ago, but the situation that Julia described had exceeded his expectations.

"Do you know the strength of the aliens?" Zac asked with some worry.

"The Intelligence said High E-Grade, but it's hard to know what that means," Julia said.

Zac nodded in agreement. Just level alone was an imprecise measurement of someone's power. For example, the Dragon he had fought in the Tower of Eternity was likely only early E-Grade, but extremely powerful due to its race and bloodline. Meanwhile, there were Mid-E Grade warriors by this point that was essentially no threat to Zac.

With his recent gains, he felt confident in dealing with some high E-Grade warriors as well, though that would depend on whether they had any unique advantages of their own. Ogras' said that the energy inside the Mystic Realm was pretty sparse, and perhaps it was hard to ponder on the Dao as well.

However, the base was most likely used to research bloodlines once upon a time, meaning every force should have one or multiple powerful bloodlines to boost their combat power. Besides, the E-Grade warriors he had fought up until now were mostly newly ascended, whereas those in the Mystic Realm might be thousands of years old.

What if he met someone who had polished their skills for millennia while spending centuries on opening each and every one of their Inherited Hidden Nodes? The leaders might even be stronger than the Dominators.

"There are also large unpopulated sections as far as I heard, and the government is currently busy exploring the sections that the natives are locked out of. There are even large forests full of monsters," Julia added.

"There are forests? Like real outside forests?" Zac asked with surprise. "Is there a world outside this star-shaped structure?"

"No, it's still inside, with walls all around. I have no idea if there's anything outside," Julia said with a shake of her head. "The government's entrance has ended up in one of these forests, but it is vastly different compared to the one you describe in the information package you gave me."

"Different how?"

"The forest is massive, almost half the size of this island I reckon. And it is full of powerful beasts at peak F-Grade," Julia said. "The government can only use their entrance at certain times a day when the beasts sleep, and rush to an entrance they have secured. Perhaps the builders of the research base were breeding the beast once, but they have definitely gone by feral now."

Zac nodded in understanding, and his heart still sped up a bit.

A bunch of powerful beasts? Wasn't that exactly what he was looking for? These ones were just F-Grade and mostly useless to Zac, but perhaps there were similar forests full of early E-Grade beasts further inside the realm?

"There are all kinds of information on this tablet," Julia said as she handed it over. "But it is mostly about the government's latest movement and the situation on Earth. The government has barely scratched the surface of the Mystic Realm, and I think you would have to go for yourself to get a real understanding of that place."

"Thank you. Good job," Zac said as he stood up.

It looked like the real showdown with the Dominators would take place in a month or two. He wasn't confident in being able to lock down Void's Disciple even with the Jamming arrays, but the situation inside the Mystic Realm would likely force them into each other's crosshairs.

The only time Void's Disciple had lost his cool was when Zac threatened to take the item inside the Mystic Realm. Snatching that item would force the Dominators to come to him rather than him trying to find them, which was the best solution he could think of right now. It was no doubt crucial to the Great Redeemer, and it beat having to scour every Zhix hive on the planet.

The biggest flaw of the plan would be the delay. Vordis might reach Earth's universe at any moment, and there really wasn't any back-up plan if that happened. It would be every man for himself. The only relief was the massive amount of teleportation tokens he had amassed in the Base Town. It would allow everyone close to him to leave earth, as long as he closed down the Cultist Incursion first.

Of course, that only went for something like 200 people.

"Ah, one more thing," Julia said as Zac was about to leave.

"Yes?" Zac asked with confusion.

"I want a job," Julia said. "A Permanent one."

"Oh?" Zac asked as he stopped in his tracks. "What do you have in mind?"

"Alea was in charge of law and order for a while, until she wasn't," Julia said, drawing a frown from Zac. "Security is still high in Port Atwood with your existence as a deterrence, but things are more chaotic in your other settlements. You are still maintaining control thanks to your armies, but we need civil law enforcement as well. I want to help build such a section."

Zac slowly mulled over for a few seconds without giving a direct response. He had honestly dropped a ball regarding this, but he could absolutely understand if normal non-combat classes and the weaker citizens felt unsafe if there was no one around to keep law and order.

But the whole concept of law enforcement was a bit tricky in their new world as well. It was easier said than done keeping a population in check when anyone could gain superpowers. Perhaps there was some service he could purchase as more options became available in the Town Shop?

"I'll talk it over with a few others before making a decision," Zac said after a while. "But it sounds like a good idea."

He had a lot to think about, so he sent a message to his sister as he left that he needed to consolidate his gains before he retreated to his cultivation cave. He started up the second cycle of the [Nine Reincarnations Manual] since he felt he might as well be productive while sitting around, and he decided to try the array as a Draugr this time.

He didn't change much, apart from starting at the life-attuned side of the array. His mind was soon filled with life, and the life-attuned energies no longer felt like poison to his undead body. Seeing that things seemed to work just fine he started circulating the manual by rote while he went over his meeting with Julia.

The array didn't take too much of his concentration while it was active, and he could even look through the tablet while his mental energy was drained and infused with attunement. Most of it was reports of movements of the various forces of Earth just like she said, which wasn't really something Zac cared about.

There were some minor conflicts brewing between the council and the New World Governments according to the intelligence, and Zac was actually a bit surprised at how unified the Council Stayed even after returning to the surface. None of the thirteen councilors had joined any of their racial factions as far as Zac could tell, instead choosing to stay with their former group.

In either case, squabbles between local forces wasn't really something that Zac wanted to get involved in, as long as they didn't involve his people or hurt innocents. Some internal strife might even toughen them up, which would prepare the Earthlings for when the planet was properly integrated into the Multiverse in the future.

Zac was more interested in the more pressing issues; the Dominators, the cultists, and the mystic realm. He was trying to figure out the best approach, one that would allow him to rid the world of lingering threats with the highest success rate.

He eventually decided against assaulting either of the two tunnels that Julia had located. He was curious about the pocket realm since he still only hadn't been able to explore its mysteries, but it felt like a safer route to reopen their own entrance. Kenzie had already made some preliminary measurements that were positive.

The cultists had detonated a massive bomb on the shores of Mystic Island, but they were forced to do it far from the tunnel itself. So it had only destabilized rather than broken down completely. Right now they were still waiting out the spatial turbulence, but it would gradually calm down over the following weeks. They might even be able to add some stabilizing arrays or treasures to the tunnel, which would force it open early if necessary.

More preparations were needed for the war against the traitor Zhix as well, which left the Cultist Incursion. Closing the incursion next felt like the most optimal route. It might leave some cultists spread all across Earth, but they could methodically be purged with the help of [Origin Arrays] over the following 100 years.

Closing the incursion would come with a lot of benefits as well. Earth was still in a "trial"-phase as things stood, and some parts of the System were still locked away from them. Closing the Incursion would allow him to purchase more structures, and it would probably activate his nexus hub.

Succeeding in proving your worth to the System by booting out all invaders also came with direct benefits according to Abby, though what kind of benefits differed since the System was always trying out new methods of integration. For example, the Ladder system was something that neither Abby nor Ogras had heard of before.

Dealing with the Cultists sooner rather than later was the best option as well. He had almost killed the Head Priest, and only a week had passed since then. He might still be severely weakened from barely escaping [Fate's Obduracy], allowing Zac to strike while the iron was hot.

The bird mountain was also pretty interesting from Julia's description. There was a critical lack of good grinding spots, but those birds sounded pretty formidable if they could even take down airplanes soon after the integration.

The hours passed as Zac finished his second day of Soul Cultivation, and the results were identical to when he cultivated as a Human. He was about to work on his Draugr race next, but his communication crystal suddenly shook, delivering the message he had been waiting for.

The time to scan everyone for lingering karmic threats was finally here, and Zac teleported over to the Atwood Academy. A Valkyrie informed him that everyone was already waiting, so he flashed over to the Dao House.

He noticed a few Tal-Eladar standing in the distance, looking at the Dao House with thoughtful faces. They had probably figured out some things about it after staying at the Academy for a few days, but the only nodded at them before entering. The thirty-odd people were already gathered in the inner chambers of the Dao House, and they all looked over when Zac arrived.

Even Ogras had emerged from his bout of secluded cultivation, though Zac could sense that he still hadn't evolved.

Zac nodded at the familiar faces before he glanced at the wall. He was surprised to feel that he still could sense a small echo of the Dao in the walls themselves, imprinted from when they cracked open the funnel. If people kept pondering on the Dao inside this place over the years it might become a real treasure even though it was made from normal materials, kind of like the Cherry Tree in his vision.

The mysterious grooves covering the Dao House wasn't the only interesting change. He spotted Sap Trang standing with two of the valkyries, and Zac barely recognized him as his hair had turned completely black over the past week. Having taken Medicinal Baths for months had improved the old fisherman's constitution tremendously, but the latest improvement was far more drastic than anything up til now.

"Long time no see," Zac smiled as he walked over to Sap Trang. "How do you feel?"

"Better than I've had in decades," Sap Trang said with a toothy smile. "That compound you sent over has worked wonders. It felt like it helped me absorb the Medicinal Baths better as well. I talked with Little Alyn earlier, and she believes my odds at evolving my constitution has improved by a lot. You don't happen to have some more? Not for me, but the other elderly in the town."

"I'm glad it worked," Zac said with a smile. "I'm afraid I don't have much of that stuff left over to help the others, but I'll see if we can buy some through the Consortia. We'll catch up later."

It was truly great news that things were looking up for the old fisherman. He was essentially the first human member of his force, and he had proven himself over and over. It would have been a real shame if he passed away from old age just as the doors to nigh-immortality had opened themselves to the people of Earth.

The compound that Sap Trang mentioned was simply some Longevity Pearls that had been ground down by the Sky Gnomes, together with a few dried herbs that were there to stop the efficacy from immediately dissipating. The short remaining lifespan of the old fisherman was one of the biggest hindrances to evolving his Race, and Zac wanted to see if the pearls could help with that situation.

To put it a bit bluntly, it was also an experiment that would benefit Zac. He had wasted a lot of lifeforce during his climb, and similar situations might arise in the future as well, as long as the Shard was stuck in his head.

Seeing the effect of longevity treasures on Mr. Trang was a way for him to prepare for the future.