

## The Fall 520

### Chapter 520: A Clean Break

Zac had tried the compound on himself as well, but the efficacy was extremely limited in his case. He didn't believe it was because of his constitution or anything like that though, but simply because he was already E-Grade Race. He would probably have to get his hands on better pearls. These longevity treasures were something he picked up on the second level of the Tower after all, so they weren't some supreme treasures.

Of course, there was also the possibility that the life-force sucked clean by the Shard was gone forever, but Zac wouldn't take that for a given until he had tried to remedy the situation with better materials. Even if that was the case it wasn't the end of the world though, as long as he reached D-Grade and restocked on a few millennia of additional lifespan.

In fact, he felt it was a possibility that his lifespan was already longer than most people as he had to evolve his Race twice. Wasn't it more than fair that he got twice as much life-force from the double upgrades?

The discussions in the room had died down as soon as Zac arrived, and he quickly realized what was going through their heads going by their expressions.

"I'm sorry to disappoint you all, but this is not another opportunity," Zac smiled as he looked around at the hopeful faces. "We are just making sure that there are no lingering side-effects to our earlier experiment. You don't need to do anything, just stand still while we do our thing."

With that, Zac took out the [Lantern of Fate] and activated it, illuminating the whole inner chamber and the participants in an ethereal light. Hundreds of strands appeared in the room, with Zac singlehandedly being the source of almost half of them. The others couldn't see anything except the spooky light from the lantern, but Zac could quickly figure out what was going on as each strand emitted a unique aura.

"How is it?" Ogras asked as he walked over, and Zac sighed in response.

Most of the lines attached to the people in the room weren't anything special, mostly leading toward various directions in port Atwood. Zac and most of the demons also had additional strands pointing toward the sky, with the demons having blood-red lines that pointed toward the same direction.

Zac and Ogras had an additional mix of different colors, no doubt representing the connections they had made in the Tower of Eternity. However, there was a group of people who had all had an ashy-grey strand that pointed toward the sky, people who really shouldn't have any connection to anyone outside earth.

It looked like the gift of Origin Dao came with a price after all.

"What do we do now? How does that thing work?" Ogras asked from the side with a low volume. "Should we...?"

"No," Zac said with a shake of his head, but he still took out [Verun's Bite]. "The lamp has a solution."

The changed appearance of the axe drew a whistle from Ogras and appreciative looks from the demons, who could easily understand that the Spirit Tool had become even more powerful. Zac didn't

immediately swing at the ribbons though, but he rather opened a small compartment on the lamp, exposing a small reservoir of oil.

This part was just as important as the lamp itself, as just seeing the Karmic lines was just half the battle. The second part was cutting them, and a normal weapon wouldn't be able to accomplish that. The best would be things like the dagger that the Abbot gave him back then, but it had broken apart after one usage.

However, the lamp wasn't a top-tier treasure without reason, and it came with a solution that even he could use.

"I only have a little bit of this," Zac said as he smeared some of the oil across the edge of his axe. "Let's hope we won't have to use this thing too much."

He did have the second treasure of the Undead Kingdom as well, the item of erasure. However, he wanted to save that for the Dominators and their items since they should have a much stronger karmic connection to the Redeemer compared to these weak ribbons.

The students of Atwood Academy recoiled in fear as Zac suddenly appeared in front of them, but he didn't dare explain what was going on in case that would ruin their preparations. He moved as quickly as he could and swung his axe at the closest grey ribbon with such speed that the young girl in front of him couldn't even react.

Ogras was just one step behind, though he simply moved the girl away from the others in case something would go wrong. Groans echoed across the hall as one person after another coughed up a mouthful of blood and fell unconscious until less than twenty people remained standing. Most of the students were among the unconscious, but one demon and a few of the valkyries had been affected as well, along with Sap Trang.

Zac wasn't surprised by the group of unconscious people. They were essentially the same group as those who had been accosted by those ghosts when he cracked open the funnel. He couldn't help but feel that these people were a bit pitiful, not only reading the smallest rewards from the funnel but also getting all of the drawbacks.

The rest stood rooted in place, not completely understanding what was going on. They had only seen Zac starting to swing his axe in the air like a lunatic, while one person after another collapsed onto the floor. They looked warily at Zac and Ogras, but they breathed out in relief when they saw Zac put the lamp away.

"Take them to the infirmary," Ogras said to the demons who stood by before he walked Zac away from the others. "We should do this again at a later date to make sure it worked. Can't be too careful that old bastard."

"We'll do a second scan before we enter the Mystic Realm," Zac nodded in agreement before he properly looked up and down at the demon. "You still haven't evolved? What's going on?"

"It's the netherblasted shadow-beast," Ogras sighed after making sure no one else was within earshot. "The bastard has complicated things for me. I heard from your sister about the Mystic Realm. I really need to go into seclusion if I want a shot at evolving before then. Can you deal with the rest yourself?"

Zac thought it over, and he eventually nodded.

"I'll head out to find the cultists next," Zac said. "They are different from the Undead Empire though. I should be able to deal with it alone."

"Their defenses seem a lot simpler; just kill everything in the surroundings. But be careful. Don't forget how crazy they are. That's how I got my arm replaced by this bastard," Ogras said as he knocked the metal cast on his arm.

"I know," Zac sighed. "I'll go alone. I'm not sure I'd be able to protect others from their fire if they start exploding themselves."

"Well, your past year has led to this moment," Ogras snorted. "Some zealot fire shouldn't be able to take out the unkillable cockroach."

"Thank you for the vote of confidence," Zac snorted at the demon who melded into the shadows the next moment.

Zac left as well after having made sure that everyone was alive and stable, and headed over to Thayer Consortia to pick up some items he had ordered. While he was there he also asked Calrin to look into blocking Technocrat tech, though he didn't hold too much of a hope of him finding anything useful.

He also asked them to start preparing for the auction. He still hadn't decided whether he should hold it before or after he dealt with the Mystic Realm, but he leaned toward the latter. No point in empowering outsiders just before the showdown that would decide Earth's future. It might come back to bite him in the ass.

He returned to his compound next and found Emily having dinner with his sister.

"I'm heading out to deal with the cultists," Zac said to the two. "Be careful while I'm gone."

"Already? You need me to call the shield squad?" Kenzie asked.

"No, I'm going alone this time," Zac said with a shake of his head, ignoring the pout coming from Emily's side.

Since Ogras had gone into seclusion to prepare for his breakthrough he didn't feel comfortable bringing Emily and the others. He had mostly brought them last time because of the high stakes of the Undead Incursion, but it was different now. If things went according to plan he would find a half-abandoned Incursion base as most of the cultists were busy exploring the Mystic Realm.

He would either close it down or flee with the help of the emerald leaf, allowing him to try again later. There was no point in risking the lives of his people in such a scenario.

In fact, he felt that anyone except Ogras might turn out to be a liability, where Zac would have to split his attention between protecting others and taking out the invaders. The Valkyries had made tremendous gains over the past months, but they still weren't ready to tackle people like the cultists head-on.

Meanwhile, he felt confident that his recent gain in power was enough to close the incursion. After all, he had managed to defeat the Head Priest once already in a head-on collision, and that was before his

Dao upgrade and while being weakened from the node opening. He was in tip-top shape right now, and he even had a charge from the Splinter as a back-up in case things turned really dire.

"Fine," Kenzie sighed. "But be careful. They seem pretty insane, but they are an ancient faction. They must have some things to rely on after being able to avoid getting eradicated after making enemies left and right."

Zac talked with his sister and Emily a bit longer before he walked over to his teleportation house. He changed his appearance with [Thousand Faces] before he entered though, as he didn't want his movements to be tracked. His vision turned black for a minute before he appeared in Westfort.

The teleportation station was bustling with activity, and over a hundred warriors were coming and going. The small British town was quickly becoming a proper world hub, though Zac believed that they hadn't managed to upgrade the town through the System just yet.

He showed an ID given to him by Thea at the security checkpoint, and he was quickly escorted to a secured area without another word. A somewhat familiar face hurried over the next moment, and Zac remembered he was one of the intelligence officers of the Marshall Clan.

"Lord Atwood," said with a small bow. "What brings you here today?"

"Is Thea around?" he asked after some thought.

He had only talked with her through correspondence after closing the Undead Incursion, as Thea and Billy had already healed up enough for them to leave by the time he returned to Port Atwood. He wasn't running against the clock right now, so he could spare some time to discuss things with her before he set off for Main Paris.

"She and Mr. Trask Jr. are currently in the library. Would you like for us to arrange transportation?" the officer asked, and Zac soon found himself sitting in the back of a town car with tinted windows.

All the defensive perimeters around the Old Homestead opened up without issue, and he was quickly led to the shell-like tower. His appearance reverted back to normal as he stepped through the door, and he found Thea sitting on a sofa where he read about Galvarion a few months back. Billy was dozing off next to her, his snores likely blocked out by an array.

However, he woke up as Zac approached and waved at him with a big grin.

"How are you two feeling?" Zac smiled as he sat down on a sofa opposite them.

"Haha, Billy is good," the giant said as he waved his massive arms with enough force to create a gust, which earned him a slap from one of Big Blue's tentacles. "Stupid fish."

Zac wondered if the two would erupt in battle, but Thea smoothly distracted Billy by taking out a grilled turkey leg, as though she had done this dance many times before.

"That's good to hear," Zac said as he looked over at Thea who had put aside the crystal she was reading. "I have some news."

He quickly recounted what he had found out from Julia regarding the Mystic Realm, though Billy quickly zoned out until he mentioned the large number of powerful beasts. He immediately wanted to head out for some thwoning, but Zac and Thea managed to calm him down.

"So what do you want to do?" Thea asked after a while. "Are you heading in now?"

"I'm completely healed up now," Zac slowly said. "So I am thinking I'll hit the Cultists first. That way I'll both gain a new entrance, while also cutting off their escape route. We can slowly flush them out afterward. Those lunatics doesn't deserve any leniency. Besides, that way we can limit the spread of information about Earth."

"They probably have already sent back information about the Mystic Realm though. I think that's what prompted the extra investment," Thea countered.

"Still," Zac said.

Another reason he wanted to close the incursion was to free himself up to use both his classes while battling the invaders without risking the news immediately reaching the church. However, he wasn't really willing to discuss that matter in front of Big Blue and Billy. He didn't believe that Billy would betray him, but the giant didn't really have any filters and might blurt it out at an inopportune time.

"Do you need help with the cultists?" Thea asked, changing the subject.

"Billy want to help as well!" the giant roared. "Stupid fire-lizards burned Billy's clothes."

"Just focus on recuperation," Zac smiled. "It will be all hands on deck in the Mystic Realm later."

"We're mostly better. Billy and I have already talked about it. If you don't need help with the Incursion, can we enter the Inheritance while you are away?"