

The Fall 535

Chapter 535: War Council

“What? Are Thea and Billy okay?” Zac asked with worry.

“They’re fine. They arrived a while ago, tried to enter the Inheritance. But the Tool Spirit is blocking them, and not even your sister couldn’t change its mind,” Joanna explained. “He’s also being a bit... like himself.”

Zac groaned and immediately took out his flying treasure, quickly returning to the volcano. Joanna waited for him there, and they teleported to his private courtyard as it was closest to the Towers of Myriad Dao. However, he barely had time to exit the teleportation house before he saw a massive form appear in front of the Dao Repository.

It was Billy, who must have evolved his skill. He was almost as tall as some of the smaller towers, reaching roughly 15 meters into the air. His club looked like something used to smash mountains, the skull on its end having a diameter of at least 5 meters. Worry gripped Zac’s heart as he activated [Loamwalker], leaving Joanna behind.

Had the Tool Spirit annoyed Billy to the point that he was gearing up to destroy the whole Dao Repository?

It wasn’t that he was worried about the repository itself. It was probably a peak D-Grade Spirit Tool, and nothing that Billy would be able to destroy no matter how much he wanted to. He was more worried about the retaliation from an insane Tool Spirit. There were D-Grade golems inside from what he had gathered, meant to be the challenge to open up the higher floors.

What if Brazla released them upon the town as punishment?

“HAHA BILLY WINS!” a massive roar echoed across half of Port Atwood as Billy jumped high into the air while stretching his weapon toward the sky.

Between the jump and the length of the club they reached a bit higher than the tallest towers, and the whole square shook when the giant landed again.

“Stupid golden ghost thinks he can be bigg-“

Billy didn’t get any further though before Brazla’s massive form appeared in full splendor above the Towers of Myriad Dao, accompanied by his signature golden radiance. The avatar was well over a hundred meters tall, and it looked down upon Billy and Port Atwood like a god standing in judgment.

“An ant dreaming of matching the sky,” a rumbling voice echoed out across the area, and Zac’s eyes widened when he saw that Brazla was about to blast Billy with one of his lightning bolts.

“WAIT!” Zac roared as he appeared in front of the towering giant. “Calm down. What is going on here?!”

Billy looked down with surprise, and he started to shrink again after throwing Brazla a glare.

“Golden boy said Billy and Thea was small, so Billy proved him wrong. He still needs a good thwonkin’,” the giant snorted.

Zac wryly smiled before he turned to Thea who had appeared close-by as well.

"You weren't lying about the Tool Spirit," she said, a few veins popping out on her forehead. "He makes Big Blue feel like a true gentleman."

"I know," Zac said with some resignation. "What's the problem here?"

"These two talentless ants tried to enter the trial without adult supervision," a haughty voice echoed out from the gates as the massive head in the sky disappeared.

The gates swung open the next moment, and Brazla along with an exasperated Kenzie walked out.

"I already told you Thea and Billy would come to take the trial, and you said that you didn't care," Zac sighed. "What's changed?"

"That was before I saw what kind of wretched beings that you wanted to waste The Great Brazla's gifts upon. Why don't I just send two pigs into the inheritances that my creator so arduously gathered? The effect will be the same," Brazla snorted as his back bent further and further back until the Tool Spirit was almost looking straight up into the sky.

Zac inwardly groaned when he saw that Brazla was in his most haughty mode today for some reason. He only took that insane power-pose when he started to refer to himself in third person and his annoyance factor maxed out. Zac knew he could probably force the thing to make way if he wanted, but he was afraid that Brazla would mess with the trial if he did something like that.

Simultaneously, he could feel killing intent leaking from Thea, and Billy's brows were crunching together until they almost formed a unibrow.

"How can anyone enter the eyes of the Great Brazla?" Kenzie cajoled from the side. "We are just scraping by on this desolate rock, trying to glean a fraction of the wisdom from the Great Sage. Surely The Great Brazla wouldn't hold back on this little bit of wisdom? I am sure my brother would improve your surroundings as a thank you for your magnanimity."

The tool spirit froze, and he slowly returned to a normal standing position, his eyes slowly turning toward Zac.

"... What do you want me to build?" Zac said.

"The Great Brazla have noticed your little spectral servant scurrying about lately, moving trees and planting flowers. His efforts are barely passable, and this great sage will allow him to create a natural spirit gathering formation around this domicile," Brazla said as though he was giving Zac a favor.

"You want a Spirit Gathering Array?" Zac said in confusion "Why?"

Brazla might act like a cultivator, but he couldn't actually cultivate. Increasing the density of the Cosmic Energy in his surroundings wouldn't help him in the slightest, and it would just make the direct area around the repository slightly worse as the energy had to come from somewhere. However, he immediately regretted his question when he saw the Tool Spirit gearing up for some insane tirade.

"Never mind. A Natural Spirit Array, right? I'll have Triv set one up as soon as he returns from his mission," Zac said. "So, they can enter now?"

“Fine, though The Great Brazla still feels that his gifts are wasted on these two. At least the little bird,” Brazla lamented. “The dumb brute seems to have found the resting place of his ancestor, so it might be a bit more apropos. Well, The Great Brazla is a gracious master and an even more gracious host. Enter, and witness a glimpse of greatness.”

“... Wow,” Thea just said as she passed through the gates, and Zac inwardly sighed when he saw she was still fuming.

“I’m sorry Billy,” Zac said to Billy who still blared at Brazla. “He is a bit mean, but you can be the bigger man here and let it go.”

“Mama always said to forgive those who don’t know better,” the giant said with a snort as he entered as well. “So Billy will forgive the stupid ghost.”

"You look better," Kenzie commented from the side. "I heard from Ilvere you looked a bit-"

“Disgusting,” Brazla cut in. “You should understand it reflects poorly upon The Great Brazla if you walk around town looking like a burnt piece of dung. Have you no shame? At least you waited to heal up before you dared present yourself in front of me.”

“Well, if you unlocked the E-Grade skills I wouldn’t be such a wretched state after every battle,” Zac snorted.

“You’re welcome to try the trial if you’re tired of living,” Brazla said with disinterest as he conjured a mirror, blocking him from seeing Zac. “That’s better.”

Zac sighed and looked away. He really wanted to access the skills locked away in the repository, but he wasn’t ready. The trail to open up the second floor was to defeat at least one Half-Step D-Grade Golem, meaning someone at the same level as Anzonil, the Array Master he met during the Hunt.

If it was just a peak E-Grade Golem, then he would probably have tried his luck, as he was somewhat confident in taking it out as long as he went all out. However, the D-Grade was a quantitative leap that far surpassed that between F and E grade, and he didn’t want to burn his chances. He only had one shot on the trial, and if he failed then he would have to wait for one of his subjects to get the job done.

Certainly, a Half-Step D-Grade Golem was ultimately not a true D-Grade golem, but it should still be far more powerful than a peak E-Grade warrior. Zac was currently hoping to reach the point where he could challenge the trial before he left Earth to continue his cultivation so that he could arm himself with a few additional skills.

But for now, he would have to do with the things that were already unlocked.

Thea stood in the distance, gazing up at the enormous statue of the Blade Emperor. His face was obscured by a wide-brimmed hat, but the focus was still the massive blade that was stabbed into the ground in front of him. It radiated a terrifying sharpness, eclipsing the insights of his own Dao even though it was just a statue. Of course, the sharpness was hollow without true meaning, just like everything else in this place.

The Marshall Scion clearly wasn’t in any mood to stay here, as she flashed away after taking a few calming breaths.

"STUPID STATUE MAN! I'LL THWONK YOU THIS TI-" a roar suddenly echoed out through the hall.

Zac immediately turned toward the source only to see Billy flying toward the head of the statue depicting the Titan. However, Billy was thankfully swallowed by the Inheritance teleporter mid-flight before he could do any damage.

"What the hell..." Kenzie muttered from the side, and Zac couldn't help but worry that he had made a mistake letting Billy enter that place.

"Can you see what's going on inside their trials?" Zac asked as he turned back toward the Tool Spirit.

"Perhaps I do, perhaps I don't. The heaven's secrets are not so easily divulged," Brazla said trying to adopt a mysterious air, but only came off as condescending.

"Well, can you tell me about the blade Emperor and the Titan? What kind of people were they?" Zac asked.

"The Titan was a dumb brute who kept causing trouble. He came to my master to have him forge a set of defensive treasures," Brazla said. "The small mountain of muscles you brought should do just fine."

Zac sighed in relief, as he felt like Billy and that guy would be two peas in a pod. Besides, someone like that would probably not have a convoluted trial. However, his relief only lasted as a weird smile spread across Brazla's face.

"As for the Blademaster... A lunatic who married his sword," Brazla snorted before he shot Zac a mocking glance. "Be careful you don't end up like him. He was a friend of master and a talented swordsman, but he died a laughingstock and his wife was sold at an auction soon after."

Zac coughed and didn't deign to comment on the Spirit Tool's snide remark, and he walked out before the Tool Spirit had time to make any more remarks about Alea.

Since Zac was back in Port Atwood he felt that he might as well head over to the Soul Strengthening Array for the day, waiting for the two to come out. He had spent the better part of a day inside, though their trials could take anything from a few hours to a few days. It was up to whatever the creator of the Inheritance had decided, and Brazla wasn't any help there.

However, Kenzie held him back before he had a chance to walk away.

"Wait, I was about to call you anyway," Kenzie said.

"What's wrong?" Zac asked as he stopped in his tracks.

"Nothing. We just got a message from Nonet before. They asked if you could join the Zhix War Council for a meeting tomorrow?" she asked.

"Of course. Are the jammers completed?" Zac asked.

"They're up and running since a few days ago," Kenzie nodded and took out the three black pillars. "Do you want to prepare the armies?"

"Have the elite squads get ready," Zac said after some thought. "We shouldn't need the whole army for these fights. We'll only target one hive at a time, and there's no lack of Zhix warriors who can make up the numbers."

Kenzie nodded in understanding as Zac put away the Jamming Arrays. He had almost forgotten about the matter of the Zhix due to his hectic schedule over the past weeks. But it looked like he had run of time to play around in the jungle. It was a bit of a shame, but he still had accomplished his main goal over there, and he could work on his skills in other places as well.

However, he didn't know how long he would be gone after joining the Zhix war chariot, so he needed to finish up with his other tasks here in Port Atwood first.

"Oh, and Calrin said he had found something you looked for," Kenzie added.

"Really? Already?" Zac said and he immediately changed his plans.

He had immediately visited Calrin about the Shipyard Upgrade quest after having talked with Karunthel a week ago, and things had looked a bit bleak at first outlook. Even the knowledgeable Sky Gnome had only heard of half of the required materials, and it was the two most common ones.

But had the little gnome suddenly come through for them and actually gathered the items ahead of schedule? It should either be that or he had finally unsealed and cleansed the hundreds of Cosmos Sacks Zac claimed after the battle outside the Tower of Eternity.

In either case, he was about to gain a windfall, and his steps got quicker and quicker as he walked toward the Thayer Consortia.