

The Fall 540

Chapter 540: Attunement

There were also over a dozen peak quality talismans that were a mix of defensive and offensive among the most valuable treasures, but Zac immediately realized that their craftsmanship paled compared to the ones he had looted from the mentalist. They would still work as back-ups to his somewhat depleted reserves, and he could give out a few more to his core fighters.

But he wasn't personally very interested in talismans of that tier any longer, feeling that his recent attribute gain had made him outgrow these items to a certain degree. After all, a peak E-Grade talisman contained roughly the power of an average peak E-Grade warrior, and he was nearing that point as is.

There were a few items he was extremely keen on keeping for himself though.

The first of them was a consumable talisman as well, called [Zephyr's Charge]. It was a peak-grade speed imbue-ment treasure if he understood the explanation correctly, and it would essentially give him wings and increase his speed for a few minutes. It would be perfect in case he needed to flee or run down a fleeing enemy, especially in his Draugr form that lacked dependable mobility options.

The second was a handful of [Spatial Displacement Talismans], a treasure that would instantaneously move him to a random spot within a kilometer. It was an amazing treasure to escape certain doom scenarios, provided that space wasn't locked down. For example, if he had a treasure like this when the Hayner Clan Patriarch tried to drop a meteor on his head, then he wouldn't have to leave the floor so early. He could just have teleported out of the hole and hunted down that treasure.

Finally, there was something called a [Blood Nucleus], a rare treasure related to bloodline awakenings. It was the most valuable item of them all, and Calrin had priced it at 20 Billion Nexus Coins. That might not seem like a terrifying amount after having possessed something like the [Divine Investiture Array], but it was still something that Zac would never have been able to afford if he tried to purchase it during an auction.

He figured that the [Blood Nucleus] would go perfect together with the marrow he got for himself from the previous quest. The only reason he didn't cram both of them down his throat right now was that he needed some sort of understanding of his supposed bloodline before trying to wake it up.

There were many items that Zac didn't recognize either, but judging by the value that Calrin had assigned they were rare treasures that warriors most likely had brought to the Base Town to sell. These kinds of treasures weren't immediately valuable to Zac, but that didn't mean that they would sell them for Nexus Coins.

Almost all forces in the multiverse were constantly operating under a lack of resources, and there were always thousands of plans or undertakings on hold due to missing certain ingredients. Top forces like the Dravorak Dynasty might not struggle like this due to their power and vast connections, but Zac had already encountered the problem of lacking materials from the Creator quest.

There were a million ways he could gain more Nexus Coins, so selling precious resources instead of holding onto them for a rainy day was just stupid. This was unfortunately how most forces reasoned, which only worsened the availability of rare items.

Calrin also provided his recommendations of what to keep, what to save for the Auction, what to put in the merit exchange, and so on. Zac mostly went with the Sky Gnome's arrangements, apart from making some minor adjustments.

It wasn't that the Sky Gnome suddenly had turned a new leaf and become a decent and honest merchant, but he had kept his greed under check since Zac returned from the Tower of Eternity. Part of it was probably because of Zac's amazing performance, while part of it was that he knew he was on thin ice after the trouble the ring he gifted Zac caused.

Zac felt like he had just won the lottery as he left the Thayer Consortia, even though there was only one "supreme" treasure like the [Blood Nucleus]. Calrin's estimate was around 100 billion, but that was going by Zecia sector prices. They believed they could make even more as long as they were smart about what items to put on the auction for the native forces.

The elites of Earth were flush with cash at the moment, and they needed to exploit that.

Every force was hunting the hundreds of millions of Zombies for everything they were worth at the moment, wanting to capitalize on this one-time opportunity. The undead were like headless chickens with the Lich King dying, and they had essentially turned into walking bags of wealth to the cultivators of Earth, just like how it was during the beginning of the integration.

Not only did people gain clean-up quests by the System, but the zombies gave a good amount of both Cosmic Energy and Nexus Coins. Add to that the Miasma Cores that formed in the elite zombies' heads, and it was so lucrative that people were still forgoing sleep even two weeks later. Even the Underworld Council only undertook a cursory search for Enigma who was still missing while they focused on enriching themselves.

At the same time, there was almost nothing for the Earthlings to spend their money on. The general stores provided by the System only sold bare essentials and the lowest grades of weaponry, and there weren't a lot of other options for them. Starlight, the Ishiate elite, apparently possessed a limited Mercantile License and had some wares to sell, but his influence was limited thanks to pushback from Calrin and the Marshall Clan who were aiming to set up their own business empire.

The Marshalls themselves had kept a low profile until now, perhaps partly because they already knew about his auction. Zac had mentioned it to Thea, who no doubt had informed her grandfather as well. Perhaps they were ready to roll out their businesses already but held themselves back out of respect to him.

Either case it was good for Zac, as it meant that people were more likely to spend their hard-earned money in Port Atwood. He could almost see the mountain of wealth in front of his eyes as he teleported back to his cultivation cave.

When he arrived in the hidden cave he looked over at the array that looked similar to the Teleportation Array, though the inscriptions were a lot denser. It was the "homing point" of the [Spatial Gate Array], the location where he would arrive in case he was forced to use the escape function.

The other part was a thin bracelet that was hidden beneath the sturdy bracer he got from Greatest. He kept the bracer on at all times, and he figured it might be able to hide the [Spatial Gate Array] from any

discerning eyes. It seemed to be one of the most valuable things in his possession, though not quite at the level of things like the [Pathfinder Eye] or the [Divine Investiture Array].

Then again, it was hard to put a price on survival. There was simply no supply of an item like the [Spatial Array Gate] in the Zecia sector, though there were a lot of other escape measures around. For example, there was the skill that Thea possessed, and whatever the Head Priest used to turn into a stream of flames that allowed him to escape the Dead Zone. There were even the weaker teleportation talismans he had gained just now.

“My lord, welcome back,” A voice drifted out from the rocks themselves as Triv emerged.

“It’s been a while. I was almost starting to fear that you had managed to escape your contract,” Zac said with a small smile. “Did you find anything interesting?”

The ghost had been gone for over a week as Zac sent it on a mission after it finished helping Kenzie setting up the cultivation caves. The ghost was a non-combat class, but his incorporeal form also made him a qualified scout by default. So Zac sent the ghost out to explore the depths of his island, to see if there was anything interesting or valuable in the vicinity of the root of the Nexus Vein.

“Even if I managed to break the Contract of Servitude I would still surely stay with the young master,” Triv hurriedly exclaimed, eliciting a snort from Zac.

But honestly, it wasn’t impossible that the ghost was telling the truth. Just like Calrin hugged onto his legs because of the potential he represented, so could Triv. A completely purebred Draugr of an ancient bloodline was unheard of in a remote sector like Zecia. The few Draugr clans around were apparently just mixed-blood clans that would just barely be considered Draugr by Heartland Standards.

Following Zac was Triv’s ticket to the Empire Heartlands in the future, as Triv was still certain that Zac would end up there sooner or later. And Zac probably would, provided that he ever reached C-Grade or higher. By that time Earth should already be safe, and the Zecia sector wouldn’t be able to provide him with a proper environment.

Triv had mentioned a common saying during one of his campaigns to recruit Zac to the dark side. He said that there were four requirements to cultivation: Wealth, Companionship, Method, and Environment. Not one could be lacking if one wanted to reach the peak.

Wealth was the most important, and that went double for someone like Zac who was just a mortal. To cultivate was to burn money, and it only got exponentially worse. In the beginning he could cultivate and gain levels with just a couple of Nexus Crystals who were barely worth anything, but now he was contemplating buying Attuned D-Grade crystals for hundreds of millions just for some advancements to his soul. And it would only get worse from here on out.

Second was companionship, but it didn’t refer to girlfriends or even Dao Companions. It meant that no one could reach the peak alone. You needed a master to teach you, friends you could trust your back to, a support system that could take care of things that were distracting you from your cultivation.

Method was partly referring to a cultivation manual, but it also incorporated things such as Inheritances, Heritages, Dao Impartments, and even hunting grounds. Some insights would have to come from within,

but there was no need to reinvent the wheel at every turn. Taking advantage of the wisdom and knowledge of others would allow you to make faster progress without any detriment.

Finally was Environment, and this requirement was why Triv believed Zac would end up in the Empire Heartlands sooner or later. It wasn't without reason that B-Grade powerhouses never appeared in the Zecia sector. It simply didn't allow it. No crops would grow if the soil was barren. He needed to go to the more prosperous sectors of the Multiverse if he wanted to progress further after a certain stage.

In fact, moving as soon as possible was the optimal choice from a cultivation standpoint. Earth was just a desolate rock by most standards, and staying here would no doubt delay his cultivation speed.

"It is quite odd," Triv said, dragging Zac back to the present. "There are some Divine Crystals growing close to the source of the Nexus Vein. This can happen spontaneously, but it is far more likely on life or nature-aspected planets. When the world becomes attuned so does most of the neutral Veins."

"So the World Core's upgrade was gaining an attunement after all?" Zac said with excitement.

This was something that had stumped him and everyone else over the past two weeks. The world was supposed to have upgraded its core because he had defeated the Undead Incursion. There even was that pulse that spread across the whole planet. However, after the pulse there was no follow-up at all.

The density of energy was pretty much the same as before, still slowly climbing as the world continued its gradual integration. No new Nexus Veins or treasures were sprouting up from the ground either, and no attuned energies could be found. Most had simply assumed that it would take more time for the world to adapt to the reward, but it looked like the clues were finally starting to appear.

"Well, that's the thing. I also sensed weak hints of Miasma close to the vein," Triv said with hesitation. "Though I don't believe the vein is turning death attuned."

"What? Did you do something?" Zac said with a frown.

"I swear on the Empire, I didn't do anything! It could be an effect of the realignment array being shut off at the last minute. Either that, or..." the ghost said, drifting off at the end.

"Or what?" Zac asked.

"Or the planet has gained a multi-attunement," Triv said.

"You mean the planet might both have life and death attunements?" Zac said, his eyes lighting up.

Wouldn't that mean that the planet was turning into a cultivation haven for himself?

"I wouldn't be so quick to celebrate if that was the case," Triv sighed. "It might not be a good thing."

Zac couldn't stop himself from audibly groaning when he saw the scrunched-up visage of the ghost. What now?