

## The Fall 567

### Chapter 567: Expansion

Zac's eyes lit up at the idea, and he could see himself throwing out his mountains of loot and watch them grow. This could be a game-changer for Port Atwood, and he immediately turned toward the scientists with fire in his eyes.

"Unfortunately, no. It doesn't work that way," a scientist said, but he quickly shrunk back when over ten angry glares were directed his way. "Ahem... That is... This change doesn't seem to affect items with a certain amount of energy. Nexus Crystals won't grow in size, for example, and neither will Spiritual Materials. However, we have only been able to test this on our limited supply of materials in this short while. There might be some materials we can grow this way to great effect."

Zac couldn't help but feel some disappointment at losing such a good money-making opportunity before it could even start. Being able to grow things like gold and steel might sound amazing, but mortal materials were essentially worthless in the multiverse.

Even Zac could conjure a mountain out of nowhere with [Nature's Punishment], and powerful beings could harvest whole planets with a wave of their hands. Some Mystic Realms also contained shocking amounts of certain elements. You could find a world containing hundreds of billions of tonnes of purest gold, ripe for the taking.

Of course, it was still worth growing some materials since it was free. There was a large demand for construction materials to build and expand the towns of his force, and normal materials were enough to build houses.

Zac already gave up on the idea, but the demon wasn't as easily convinced.

"What about the walls of this place?" Ogras said with a frown. "That metal can't be something common. I couldn't even leave a lasting mark when going all out last time I was here."

"That- We are not sure how to explain the walls, but we have a conjecture?" another scientist explained as she adjusted her glasses. "We believe that the material of the base itself, while extremely high technology, is not spiritual in nature. It is some sort of advanced metallurgy that we don't understand. Its regenerative properties are in turn powered by an external energy supply."

Zac nodded in agreement, remembering the Technocrat vessel he visited. It was the same there. The Technocrats seemed to use advanced techniques to somehow drain high-grade materials from their spirituality, while still retaining their strength. It seemed like a waste of time to Zac, but it might be required for the materials to work with the "Dao of Technology".

"We haven't been able to prove this though, as we've been unable to take samples," she added.

They asked a few questions more about the mysterious growth, but there was only so much that the scientists had managed to find out. They neither had the tools nor the strength to get to the bottom of things, and most of what they knew was conjecture. Zac guessed that he would find out more as he ventured deeper into the Mystic Realm.

"Have you encountered any living beings?" Zac asked next. "Apart from the worms."

“No, but the amount of time we spent inside the actual construct is limited. Only three of us managed to get clearance,” Tina said from the side. “We also never left the security door that protects this section, as we were afraid to open it and let the natives inside.”

“It’s good that you took it safe,” Zac nodded before he asked with confusion. “But what do you mean not getting access? That console doesn’t give access to everyone?”

“No,” Tina said with a shake of her head. “I think it’s bugged or something.”

“Or it has some sort of requirements we don’t fully grasp just yet,” the head scientist added. “There seem to be some requirements though, the main being a minimum power. All the people with access are over level 50.”

“Anything else?” Zac asked.

“Two are mortals, one is a cultivator. So spirituality might not actually be a boon but a hindrance,” a scientist hesitantly said. “But it’s too early to tell with such a small sample.”

“Also, we only managed to get Tier-2 clearance, which only let us travel a very limited section outside. Only some doors opened for us. We might not even have been able to open that security door even if we tried,” Tina said.

“Maybe I had beginner’s luck? Or maybe I’m just that handsome?” Ogras grinned from the side, drawing multiple eye-rolls in response.

It would be a problem though if only Ogras could control that main exit from their position on the frontier. Would they have to station him like some sort of doorman just so they would be able to maintain their mobility? And what about further inside? There would no doubt be more barriers toward the core of the Mystic Realm.

“It might be looking for some specific genome that only a few in the multiverse possess. It shouldn’t be based on human anatomy considering a demon has had the most success though,” Joanna ventured. “If this place is built by Technocrats it shouldn’t make its decision on something like constitution or levels, right?”

“Right,” Zac nodded. “Anything else?”

“There has been seismic activity in the past two weeks. It might be related to the growth,” another scientist said after some thought. “The earthquakes have been mild so far, but they might cause troubles down the line if they increase in severity. The walls might break apart from the vibrations, allowing outsiders to enter our secured area.”

Zac nodded in understanding, a slight frown adorning his face. He had heard just how sturdy this place was from Ogras. Furthermore, it had managed to hold peak E-Grade warriors trapped for millennia. He probably wouldn’t be able to open new pathways by punching his way through the walls even if he exhausted himself.

Then again, few things could contend against nature itself, and it wouldn’t be too surprising if some cracks started to appear. But Zac didn’t feel that to be just a negative. There were obviously problems

with mobility inside this place since the natives still hadn't managed to escape to Earth. That probably meant that it would be difficult reaching either the Dominators and the Dimensional Seed as well.

"Thank you for your excellent work," Zac said as he looked around. "I know you guys are tired of this place, but we can't leave just yet. Some new intelligence has come to light since you were locked inside, and every faction on Earth is scrambling to get inside this place. We are already behind the others because of the cultists, so I will need to rely on your expertise a while longer."

The scientists nodded without hesitation, and Zac guessed that they were more than happy to stay now that there was a bunch of powerful people to protect them. After all, what scientist wouldn't be interested in researching a magical world in a hidden dimension that kept bending the laws of physics?

Everyone already knew what they were supposed to do, and they split up to lead their respective factions as one person after another emerged through the teleporter. The transportation of personnel took hours as the teleporter couldn't stay active continuously. Kenzie shut it down on multiple occasions to make sure that her array wouldn't suddenly crack from overextension. It was important to maintain function as long as possible in case something unexpected happened.

They would probably need to order other things from Calrin as well as they kept figuring out the rules in this weird place. Besides, they were still able to spy on the other factions as long as the tunnel remained open, and Zac might also need to exit in the next few days depending on how things panned out.

Setting up a proper command center and barracks would take the better part of a day. They didn't know how long they would need to use this place for, so they did everything properly like they were building a whole town from the ground up. It felt extremely slow to Zac, but he also knew that something like this would be completely impossible without the aid of Cosmos Sacks and superhuman strength.

However, the mass-scale expansion angered the only other resident of the secluded biosphere, and a hundred worm-like creatures suddenly burrowed out of the ground and struck the settlers to protect their domain. However, they were immediately cut into ribbons by Thea who happened to be nearby.

Zac's whistled in surprise at the efficiency at which she disposed a bunch of peak F-Grade beasts. It looked like her gain had been pretty impressive, after all. It might be a result of incorporating that Sword Intent she gained inside the Inheritance, but Zac distinctly felt that her Dao was improving at a rapid pace.

"She's become more powerful," Ogras said as he emerged from the shadows. "You should either bed her or dispose of her while we're here. Either way, you'll have dealt with a potential threat."

"Whatever," Zac snorted. "I'm tired of standing around watching the construction. Let's go check out the base for a bit."

"What? Right now?" Ogras blanched. "I'm hurt over here."

"If you're well enough to run your mouth, then you're surely well enough to walk around a bit as well," Zac said as he started gathering people.

Soon enough a preliminary scouting party was assembled, consisting of Zac, Kenzie, Ogras, Thea, and Ibtep. The insectoid acted as a representative to the Anointed, and he also had a scouting class which might come in handy.

They weren't planning on going too far today, but just to see if they could get credentials and observe the changes inside the proper structure. There was also a hidden reason only known to Zac and Kenzie. Zac wanted to see if he or at least his sister could gain access to the main systems of this research base, either through their heritage or through Jeeves.

That would give them a huge edge in the competition for the treasure. In fact, it might end the struggle altogether if they could simply lock everyone in place while they went and fetched the seed.

The group set out, leaving the massive Anointed to guard the base in case of another monster wave, but Zac felt it was unlikely. He had gazed around the biosphere from a high vantage with [Cosmic Gaze], and he only found a few hundred markings of attuned energies. That last skirmish had probably wiped out over a third of all so-called [Ocodon Worms].

It didn't take long for Ogras to lead them to the gate he had used the last time he visited.

"It's really further up," Ogras said as he stabbed his spear into the ground to use as a foothold, and he had to jump up to touch the screen.

The door swung open without incident, displaying what looked like a storage room or perhaps break room.

"Well, the arrays and technology seem to function just fine, even if this place is growing," Ogras muttered as he made to stride inside.

"Wait a bit," Kenzie said before she floated up to the screen herself, no doubt temporarily assisted by her Dao.

Zac looked on with anticipation, and his eyes lit up just like the screen the moment Kenzie touched the screen. A pleasant female voice spoke out through some sort of hidden speaker, confirming that another credential had been handed out.

[Chief Caretaker Signature added. Tier-4 Access Added.]

"What? Chief Caretaker? I only became a caretaker with worse access?" Ogras spat with jealousy written all over his face.

"The computer obviously felt you were meant for grunt-work while I was leadership material. Or perhaps I'm just that handsome," Kenzie said with a grin, drawing a glare from the demon.

Everyone quickly followed suit to get their credentials, but the others weren't as lucky as Kenzie. Thea managed to at least get Tier-3 access like Ogras, but when it was Ibtep's turn nothing happened. And worse yet, the same thing actually happened with Zac.

Zac looked at the screen with confusion, some intrusive thoughts gnawing at him in the back of his mind. He knew there was something odd about the timeline when he was a baby, and the visions of Leandra he had seen had hinted at some things that Zac didn't really want to think of. His sister had been given the best clearance right away, but he wasn't even accredited? How could that possibly happen when it was their family that build this place?

Unless his family tree wasn't as clear-cut as believed.

