

## The Fall 579

### Chapter 579: Void

Zac still hadn't fully gripped what he could and couldn't do with his future skill upgrades and skill fusions, so he couldn't help but worry about making a colossal mistake by removing some of his class skills to get a quick power-up. However, some choices weren't very hard to make, the first being his shapeshifting skill.

The upgraded version unsurprisingly commandeered the same skill slot as [Thousand Faces], and it was the first pick of Zac. A familiar screen appeared in front of him the next moment.

[Learning the skill Million Faces will result in the permanent loss of the skill Thousand Faces. Proceed?]

Following that was a simple [YES/NO] prompt.

Zac touched the 'YES', prompting a stream of energy to enter his body. It made its way to his throat, and a stabbing pain spread across his neck as one skill fractal branded itself on top of the old one, supplanting its spot.

The discomfort was thankfully just at the level of redrawing one's pathways, and Zac had ample experience with that after breaking open a bunch of nodes. The pain soon abated, and the transfer was complete. He opened his skill screen and Thousand Faces was gone as expected, replaced with a new line.

[Million Faces - Proficiency: -. A million Faces, A million lives. Become an untraceable stream in the fabric of reality. Upgradeable.]

The prompt earlier was something that Alyn had already told him about, and Zac knew that he would only get it once like some sort of tutorial. There wouldn't be any warnings in case of skill clashes again, except when getting a new skill through one of his classes.

The skill was the same as the new one in the sense that it didn't have any proficiency, but its fractal was far more intricate compared to the old one. However, Zac saw the base pattern was pretty much the same, just with greater details and a couple of additions.

Zac also needed to add the skill in his undead form, but he would have to wait for an hour before he could swap over again.

In the meantime, there were more skills to learn as a human. The second one that Zac immediately learned was [Primal Polyglot], a skill that was a superior E-Grade alternative to [Book of Babel]. Zac had already learned that multiple skills had similar functions as [Book of Babel], but the better ones provided additional benefits as well.

This skill was one such example.

[Primal Polyglot] provided the same feature of breaking down language barriers, but it went one step further. It provided the user with an almost instinctual understanding of 'Dao-based' language according to the description. This applied to a lot of things, most notably inscriptions, formations, and even pathways.

The skill wouldn't allow him to understand any fractal he saw at a glance, but it would help him get a sense of what he was dealing with based on the fundamental characteristics of the fractal. The same went for inscriptions and even some written languages. It would help Zac with everything from deducing arrays to spotting hidden dangers, and it seemed like a skill that could go hand in hand with his [Cosmic Gaze].

[Primal Polyglot - Proficiency: -. To comprehend the Language of the Dao is to comprehend the universe.]

Zac hoped that this skill would not only help him catch up with cultivators who had properly learned to decipher fractals and pathways since they were young, but perhaps even bridge some of the gaps of having no Dao Affinities.

Another skill that he considered replacing was [True Strike]. The one that occupied the same slot was [Surging Vitality], the skill unsurprisingly related to the Vitality attribute. The skill he got from the duplicitous demon during his tower climb had proven useful in a couple of battles, but it wasn't a critical addition in his human form.

His Edge of Arcadia-class rather excelled in large-scale battles, and [True Strike] couldn't help much there.

More importantly, its effect had proven somewhat limited on enemies with ample combat experience, such as Void's Disciple. They seemed able to intuit it was a feint with their honed battle instincts, making it a waste of an effort. Replacing it with a skill that could boost his healing abilities drastically seemed like a worthy trade.

However, he held off on it for now, opting to wait to see whether he could add the skill in his Draugr class instead. His undead side was still superior for recuperation as it didn't require his organs to function, and there was no skill occupying that specific slot in his second set of pathways.

The only issue was the fit on his undead side. The original Brazla had planned for a lot, but preparing for undead descendants wasn't one of his contingencies. Only the ancillary skills on the first floor had fit his Draugr side at all, and Zac wasn't sure he would fare any better this time around. But it was worth the try if it meant he could keep another skill.

Having gone through the options he eventually sat down to rest, waiting for the cooldown of his Specialty Core end. During that time he kept absorbing Cosmic Energy from E-Grade Nexus Crystals. It didn't really help him with his cultivation, but some of it was swallowed by the core to be converted to Miasma. He had been completely drained when he swapped over, and this way he wouldn't be hit by a severe state of weakness when turning undead again.

It was a bit stressful to stay outside the Mystic Realm this long, but he didn't have much of a choice. He needed to learn every skill that could be useful right now, and he was in a pretty wretched state in any case. He had joked about crawling back to the Mystic Realm if need be, but he might actually have been forced to do so if he didn't rest up while waiting for his Specialty Core Cooldown.

Some of his weakened state could be traced to dozens of internal wounds he accumulated during his rampage, but most of it no doubt was an effect of the [Rageroot Oak Seed].

Zac had really underestimated that seed, no matter if you were talking about the influence it had on his mind or the side-effects of using it. Most of the toxins had been removed during the tempering, but he still felt almost like he had one foot in the grave. He didn't even dare to imagine what kind of state he would be in if he hadn't enjoyed the cleansing magma immediately after. More importantly, Zac understood that he never could use that item in front of people he couldn't trust 100% as he would be utterly vulnerable afterward.

An hour quickly passed and Zac reluctantly got back to his feet. One new skill after another was added to Zac's repertoire before he finally swapped to his Draugr form and went another round. The final tally was six skills in his human form and three skills in his Draugr side. His fears were unfortunately realized when it turned out that only the ancillary skills could be added to his undead side, which forced him to give up on [True Strike].

A top-tier E-Grade healing skill simply trumped the utility that the misdirection skill provided.

Seeing that he was done with everything he exited the Repository, almost thankful that Brazla was nowhere in sight. Waves of exhaustion crashed against his mind, but he still made a last-minute decision to head over to the Thayer Consortia.

He had a lot of outstanding orders with the Sky Gnome at the moment, most of them for quite rare items. It felt prudent to check things out himself in case he needed to ask follow-up questions to whatever Calrin had managed to acquire.

But more importantly, he needed to see if the Sky Gnome could find out anything about corrupted bloodlines or the Void Emperor Bloodline. Hopefully, he would be able to get his hand on some missive explaining the situation before he was locked inside the Mystic Realm. That would allow him to side-step a potential mistake down the line.

Each step felt like a workout, but he soon enough arrived at the Thayer Consortia, surprising Calrin who was busy at work fielding the hundreds of work orders for everything from defensive talismans to cultivation resources to use in case they got stuck inside the research base.

"Lord Atwood, don't you look... Eh..." Calrin coughed, seemingly unable to come up with a compliment that wasn't a blatant lie. "There's no need for you to come yourself next time. Those spear maidens of yours can bring the things you require next time."

"I was in the neighborhood. Have you found what I asked for?" Zac sighed as he collapsed into the closest chair.

"I have. It's only the box though," Calrin said, a slight blush tinting his round cheeks. "I'm afraid that the rest were out of our grasp, even at a premium."

Zac had tried getting his hands on all kinds of items that could provide immediate power-ups, the most pressing being E-Grade Dao Treasures. He hadn't eaten a single one since reaching E-Grade, which meant that he would get the full benefit if he managed to secure one.

There was a decent chance that a high-quality Dao Treasure would propel him all the way to gaining a High Mastery Dao Fragment, which was why Zac had wanted to get one even if he had to pay ten times

what they were worth. He was even ready to sell off most of his treasure stockpile if the Sky Gnome could make it happen. But it looked like money couldn't just solve everything.

Zac also expended some efforts to figure out what the Spatial Artifact in the Mystic Realm was in case he needed to prepare something to snatch it. Void's Disciple had divulged the name but neither Brazla nor Calrin could find anything out at all. Of course, Zac didn't dare to outright ask around about a 'Dimensional Seed'.

This treasure was something that the Church of Everlasting Dao went all-out to obtain, to the point that they gave up all their other objectives. If someone suddenly started inquiring about such an item to the intelligence-gathering houses, trouble might soon follow. Certainly, most such establishments prided themselves on their discretion, but that was just up to a point.

So they could only gather missives on spatial and dimensional treasures in general, hoping that one of them would detail what a Dimensional Seed was. But so far there wasn't much.

"Oh! That reminds me," Calrin said as he took out a crystal. "This one didn't have any information on the Dimensional Seed, but it did actually have some information about the [Ferric Worldeater]."

"Oh, really?" Zac asked with surprise.

"There is a faction called the Void Monastery led by a peak figure of the Zecia sector, the Void Priestess. They are in control of a unique spatial anomaly the Void Star, and according to rumors there have been sightings of [Ferric Voidwyrms] drifting in the void around it. The name sounded familiar, so I started looking into it. Apparently [Ferric Voidwyrms] are the larvae-form of a [Ferric Worldeater]", Calrin said.

This was great news to Zac, and the excitement dispelled some of the exhaustion.

The [Ferric Worldeater] was one of the materials that Karunthel required to upgrade the shipyard. Zac already knew about the first two items, and it was just a matter of time before he could get his hands on them. The last two were trickier. But Zac believed he might be able to find out some more about the fourth item [Daemonic Manastone] through Ogras.

Since it had the name Daemonic, it might perhaps be related to the Demonic hordes. There were only two pure demonic factions in the whole Zecia sector, with the Azh'Kir'Khat Horde being the stronger of the two. There were certainly more demonkin spread across the sector just like humans, but Azh'Kir'Khat was his best bet.

That left only the worldeaters, but there hadn't been much to go by. They were surprisingly hard to gather intelligence on, even after having such an ominous name. But it looked like the Sky Gnome had come through for him once more.

Better yet, Zac actually had an in with this particular force.

"They are still quite dangerous even in their larvae form, but they will only evolve to their true state if they manage to devour a World Core. The better the World Core, the greater the potential of the critter. If it manages to gobble up a C-Grade World Core, then the thing would eventually become unstoppable in a remote sector such as ours," Calrin said with some fear in his eyes.

"What kind of faction is the Void Monastery?" Zac asked.

He knew that they were religious in nature based on the terminology, but he never had a chance to ask about it when he met Leyara in the Base Town. His curiosity had grown since getting the [Void Heart]-node, and now it felt as though they were connected by fate.

The Void Monastery might hold not only the solution to finishing Karunthel's quest, but it might even hold the key to his new bloodline.