

The Fall 628

Chapter 628: Resisting Fate

A lance of golden flames tore through the air, and Ogras barely managed to avoid it before he unleashed a beam of destruction of his own. However, he didn't aim at the bishop in the forefront, but rather at the group of underlings who worked on infusing the weird array at the edge of the mountain.

"Why fight? This is a world of sinners, they must be cleansed!" the bishop roared. "The Heavens themselves are on our side. Move away, stop resisting fate."

"Well, you have me convinced," Ogras said with a roll of his eyes.

He was swallowed by a wave of shadows, appearing in front of the leader as he unleashed a sharp stab aimed at his throat. Unfortunately, a swam of golden motes of light forced him away yet again. He had already been blasted by one of those things, and he was still missing a chunk of flesh on his side. Ogras tsked in annoyance as he glared at the cultist leader who looked all-too-similar to the bastard who took his arm.

This one was far stronger though, and it wasn't only thanks to the fact that he was no longer restricted like they were during those beast waves. More importantly, he was backed up by far more professional elites compared to the strike squad who had appeared through the mini-incursion.

He could only flash away again, landing on a cliff made from Memorysteel that gave him vantage over the cultist army.

How did things get out of hand to this point? Did those two siblings know that this god-damned place was going to fall apart? There definitely was something suspicious going on, particularly with the girl. There was always that look in her eye when they talked. Like she was holding in something huge.

Was Zachary Atwood downplaying their role in regards to the Technocrat heathens? Did they have some other hidden motives in coming to this accursed place? It was no point worrying about that now. He would be able to ask that annoying guy himself as long as he and the 'lady Marshall' didn't mess up too badly.

But these cultists weren't any pushovers, and there were just too many of them.

Thankfully, he had already absorbed the [Corporeal Serum], and the effect was amazing. Not only did it provide as many attribute points as a few levels would, but it completely pushed his Race all the way to D-Grade.

Certainly, he had already made some impressive strides through the pills he embezzled at the Base Town along with high-quality herbal baths. But he had to give it to these Technocrat heretics; they knew how to brew a potion. Perhaps it wouldn't be so bad becoming the son-in-law to a powerful Technocrat, enjoying these sorts of serums on the down-low while maintaining the fa?ade of a good and proper orthodox cultivator.

Perhaps he should take a cue from Thea Marshall's tactics.

Of course, the real gain of the serum didn't come from a small boost in attributes and an increase in his longevity, especially when it felt less and less likely he would get to enjoy his additional lifespan as the

minutes passed. The real gain came from his body's transformation. Who would have thought that his series of circumstances would result in him getting a Mutated Race?

He still felt some lingering shock when remembering the surprise waiting for him when he opened his status screen after having imbibed the serum.

[D] Planeswalker Demon

Planeswalker Demon, a unique race not recorded within the Azh'Kir'Khat Horde. An amalgamation of his beast companion and his own heritage. He had heard of things like this happening before. People encountering fortuitous, or more likely unlucky, encounters sometimes ended up changing their bodies to the point that they no longer could be considered the same race as they once were.

Truthfully, something like this generally ended in disaster. The races of the multiverse were the product of billions of years of natural selection, essentially perfect vessels for cultivating the Heavenly Dao. That was why most races looked so similar in their makeup; the cultivation pathways worked best when they looked a certain way.

So, to change this product of nature would usually result in a mutation that brought more problems than perks. After all, if it was a good thing it would be called something like Ascended Race or at least Augmented Race, not something so ominous as Mutated Race.

Yet, in his case, Ogras felt he came out ahead. Perhaps some of that aberration's luck was finally rubbing off on him.

He looked at the vast field of shadows that harried the vanguard army, and it felt like he was looking at his own body. He had never felt so close to his Dao or the shadows he controlled. It was like the difference between a pyromancer and a fire elemental. Both were masters of flames, but only the elemental could claim the Dao of Fire as its birthright, controlling it with inborn ease. That was how he felt with the shadows right now.

Ogras had even sensed the location of a Hidden Node when he and his familiar were melded into one; roughly in the middle of his spine. Give it a decade or two and he was confident he'd be able to grind it open with his manual even if he didn't find any amazing treasures to help him out. There still was the hidden threat of where the hell Asshole's consciousness had disappeared to, but that was a worry for later. For now, there were lizardmen to kill.

Thankfully he wasn't the only one who had made some gains.

A flower of sword radiance and blood bloomed as Thea Marshall appeared seemingly out of nowhere among a group of cultists, killing two and maiming another before they had a chance to react. A massive pillar of fire erupted where she stood, but the human had already fled under the guise of Ogras' shadows.

In another corner of the army, a throat was slit open as though by itself, yet no one noticed until the zealot toppled over. Only at that time did fiery shields erupt in the area.

Ogras whistled in surprise as he melded with the shadows. The girl had a knack for timing, no matter when talking about finding an opening to appear herself or silently assassinating unknowing warriors. She was like a gust of wind. By the time the gale had passed, you were already dead.

Of course, her antics were only made possible thanks to her upgraded weapon. Ogras couldn't help but feel a pang of envy when he saw how huge an upgrade that hidden blade had undergone after incorporating that crystal. It somehow passed right through the defenses of these lunatics without alerting anyone, turning into a supreme assassin's tool.

If only he had taken it for himself instead. An ability like this was exactly what he needed for his new spear. But that little lass had been smart, kissing that netherbeast before he set off. If he made his move now... it would spell trouble. He knew he wouldn't get away with it considering his reputation. But there would be more opportunities in the future.

She was lacking in raw firepower even with her upgraded weapon though, even worse than himself, and she could only take out one or two soldiers after staking her life. There was clearly a limit on how often she could use that piercing skill of her blade as well, and she only dared to activate it against the normal soldiers.

Besides, she could only move this freely thanks to him drawing the attention of the bishop and the elite squad. But Ogras could still see a seed of potential in her now, something he hadn't really felt before. As long as she had a fortuitous encounter or two before evolving, she would have a chance to make a name for herself in the Zecia sector in the future.

Of course, not like the monster in their midst.

Unfortunately, even with their recent boosts, they were fighting a losing battle. Ogras once more unleashed a barrage of spears from a mirage clone in the distance as he stabbed out from the shadows with his spear. A golden shield appeared to block once more, and Ogras could only sigh and recede into the darkness again.

His eyes turned to the growing golden fractal covering the edge of the mountain, and he knew it wouldn't be long before yet another series of islands fell. The plan of the cultists was crude but effective. They had quickly figured out that it was actually the mountain that protected the realm fragments floating around in the Void.

They somehow infected the energy keeping the islands safe before destroying the bridge connecting to the platforms outside, causing a shocking chain reaction. That would leave more energy for the mountain itself, likely extending the time it would be able to remain before this hellhole collapsed.

It would also cut off any unlucky people who still hadn't reached the mountain.

Normally Ogras wouldn't care considering he had already made it, but he needed to stall these lunatics until backup arrived. He and the Marshall girl had already spotted their people scrambling on their way here, but there were a lot of islands to pass on the way to the mountain, and the cultists were too efficient in their method of destruction.

That's how the two found themselves in a battle of attrition against an army of over a thousand cultists that seemed intent on setting the whole mountain on fire. They could only slip through the cracks and cause some annoyance and delays, and hopefully, that would be enough.

Another wave of flames spread out as a hundred Cultists slammed their staffs into the ground, and a scorched Thea was forced to desperately jump to safety while Ogras barely managed to fend off the waves while retreating.

“This one is done for,” Ogras sighed as he appeared next to his companion. “Let’s back off and recuperate before the next wave.”

Thea wordlessly nodded as she took out a Nexus Crystal from her pouch. Her eyes were sunken from exhaustion, and Ogras knew he didn’t look much better. He had just thirty percent left in his tank, and they would need to keep going for hours if they wanted to delay the cultists long enough.

The two scurried into the cracks in the mountain, taking advantage of the uneven terrain to hide from the pursuit. A squad of elites tried to follow them through the cracks, but it only took a few minutes to lose the trail.

Ogras thumped down on the ground in a secluded crevasse a few minutes later and started absorbing some energy as well. Thea mirrored his actions as she ate some dried rations to fill her stomach as well. The rumbling thunder of yet another collapsing island echoed out in the distance.

“This is the final stretch, keep going!” Cervantes urged as his eyes were veritably burning with hatred.

The sky collapsed once more as another accursed tentacle of the Collector greedily grabbed at a clump of tribesmen. He was exhausted, but Cervantes still roused his bloodline as he flashed forward to intercept.

His whole body transformed into a radiant light that took the form of a massive wolf’s head, and it bit down at the tentacle with enough force to rip space apart. A shudder spread across the tentacle as Cervantes infused a storm of energy through his fractal teeth, but he knew all-too-well how durable this bastard was. This bite of his was just a scratch to this monstrosity.

A part of the light turned into his legs as he touched down on the ground to readjust his momentum, and a geyser of moonlight pushed the appendage far into the air by taking advantage of the momentary immobility from his bite. His tribesmen didn’t waste his efforts by staying to fight alongside him, but instead opted to make it worthwhile. They urged their exhausted bodies to turn into beams of light as they flashed forward toward the bridge, leaving an illuminated corridor through the end of the island.

A dozen tentacles were already descending by that point, all of them aiming toward Cervantes himself. He wasn’t surprised. This ancient bastard had harried them for the last hours and across three whole islands, and it had already realized who it was that kept it from adding more bodies to its collection.

The whole sky was blotted out by hands, some of them clearly belonging to his tribesmen, but Cervantes didn’t panic at all. A hateful sneer spread out across his face as he threw out a meticulously crafted machine as large as a full-grown man. A sharp whistle was released by the machine before it froze in space, and a silver radiance spread out the next second, illuminating the whole sky.

The light lingered for a second before it started to change, congealing into what almost looked like solid matter. It wasn’t actually what happened, but Cervantes melded with the tunnel of light to escape the Lunar Domain. It was his father’s invention, a method to stabilize space with the Dao of the Moon.

Its original use was to forcibly stabilize chaotic zones during the Cataclysm, but it worked quite well in dealing with Void Beasts as well. The tentacles started to rapidly distort as the laws of space were reinforced, but the Collector was unable to easily extricate itself. Space had already become too stable, and even Cervantes would have a hard time moving through that domain, let alone a Void Beast.

The appendages were trapped for the moment, giving Cervantes and his rearguard the opportunity to cross the bridge. But the Collector was ultimately a pinnacle creature, and space itself cracked as the monstrosity ripped itself free. It did lose quite a few of its trophies in the process, but Cervantes knew that it was ultimately just a flesh wound.

They were safe for now, but Cervantes still had a hard time swallowing the hatred in his heart. Over two hundred of his tribesmen had been snatched up over the past hours, each of them handpicked elites whose talents would be a great asset when rebuilding their tribe on the outside. He couldn't believe their bad luck that this horror had decided to doggedly target them when there no doubt were far easier trophies to collect.

One day he would return to this accursed dimension just to rip this bastard in two.

"People ahead! Humans!" a scout suddenly exclaimed as her eyes flickered with light, her warning dragging Cervantes back to the present.

Cervantes hesitated for only a second before his eyes gleamed with ruthlessness. He took out a small syringe and injected it into his arm, and he felt a surge of power spreading through his limbs.

"Ready yourselves for battle," he growled.