

## The Fall 635

### Chapter 635: Bad Omens

Hekruv Vira sighed as he looked out at the remaining droplets of light that lit up the void like fireflies at the end of their flight. Another one had just winked out, no doubt because of the energy finally running out. They had built a hundred arks just in case, but now just three remained.

One could argue that the losses didn't quite match up to the numbers, considering the remaining arks only survived did thanks to powerhouses infusing them with their power. But it could also be seen as an abject failure in the sense that their old, weak, and sometimes young, had all been sacrificed while the powerful saved themselves.

A shudder wracked the whole lifeboat, and the passengers didn't dare breathe as they looked at the barriers keeping the void at bay. They had held again, but everyone knew it was just a matter of time. Hekruv glanced at the enormous sphere above the mountain before his eyes turned to the pulse that rippled out toward eternity.

One thing good about that shockingly powerful treasure awakening was that most of the Void Beasts were forced away or downright killed by the spatial fluctuations that grew more and more intense.

The downside was obviously that their arks were caught in this subdimension, unable to find any rifts in space to escape through. Those fluctuations had crushed them all, and Hekruv wouldn't be surprised if the energy emanations would have great repercussions even on the surface dimensions.

But this was no time to worry about the outside world. They first needed to grasp their final shot at survival. Their vessels were meant to escape through the edges of the mystic realm, but now they had almost reached the core.

Just a little bit more.

"What is this interference?!" Vovidis roared with fury as his Cosmic Vessel once more was thrown out from the hidden dimension, small cracks covering its hull.

He was so close that he could taste it. The swirls of fate suffused the whole region. A few more jumps and he would be able to pinpoint the planet.

"Master, the ship will not survive another jump according to the readings," a wet, slightly gurgling voice said. "The spatial fluctuations are too powerful."

Vovidis looked at the wretched state of his 'disciple' with a frown. It was extremely lucky that he reached Seed 7 before reaching the main target, the world inhabited by Zachary Atwood. Some things could only be discovered by experimentation, and there were clearly some issues with his original plan.

The fulcrum's soul was supposed to be a conduit, but the forces ripped it apart much too quickly, quickly turning it all into a chaotic mix of discordant wills and Karma. It made the bridge between the fate of the world and Vovidis too fragile, and he had only managed to get a taste of it before the connection was cut.

Voridis had barely managed to salvage a small piece of the rapidly dissipating energies as the world died, but that morsel was utterly insufficient to allow him to form a world of his own. He had instead used it to perform a series of tests with the help of his new little follower, Vasidas Medhin.

It was lucky that Voridis didn't follow his first instinct to extract his soul and discard him as he originally meant to when planning this whole undertaking. He had come to realize that such an action might have led to unexpected troubles. After all, his whole plan was only made possible by utilizing the Dao of Karma to form a master-disciple bond with his beacons.

Most things could be circumvented, but it was often easier to just follow the Dao. Killing his disciple would sever karma, but doing so might actually break his connections to his other beacons.

Luckily, the dynamics of discipleship was not something that was etched in stone. Wasn't allowing your follower to enjoy the effects of your experiments a way to nurture your successor? If Vasidas happened to have some adverse reactions that showcased the faults of the experiments, wouldn't that be the best for everyone involved so that the master could correct his wrongs?

A stroke-like shudder wracked Vasidas which brought Voridis out of his musings. The young man's demeanor had changed, and Vasidas hatefully stared at his master like he wanted nothing more than to rip him apart and eat his flesh.

It looked like the fulcrum's remnants had appeared again.

"Just how do you keep appearing?" Voridis muttered with a mix of curiosity and exasperation. "You should have been annihilated by the storm of Fate."

He waved his hand the next moment and suppressed the remnant soul, allowing his disciple to regain his mental faculties. Voridis didn't believe that such an issue would prove a problem for himself, considering the vast difference in power between himself and Zachary Atwood, but he had still perfected the filtering system to make sure too much remnant wills didn't enter his world.

Some corruption was bound to appear when subverting fate, but as long as he held the supreme will, it should be slowly salvageable. He would break through and immediately eat his prepared longevity medicine. The additional eons of lifespan would be enough to figure out his next step.

"Have the golems start repairs," Voridis muttered. "I'll take the opportunity to make some more calculations. I might be able to reach the planet in a single jump based on the accumulated Karma in this region. Hopefully, the spatial turbulence will calm down by the time I'm done. If not, we'll have to simply break through."

"I'll arrange it," Vasidas quickly said and shuffled toward the warehouse housing the repair golems.

Voridis took a deep breath as he gazed out in the beyond. The heavens were shifting, and he couldn't help but feel a strong sense of urgency.

Galau sighed as he put down the damaged piece of armor before making some notations in his ledger. What was it with pirates and fake inscriptions? Every fake rune he encountered felt like a loss of wealth, like he had been tricked somehow.

"Why so glum?" a laughing voice asked. "Being a junior quartermaster isn't quite the same as becoming a merchant, but it should beat being tortured to death for information?"

Galau looked up to see his new friend of circumstance. His purple hair had been cut into a mohawk that was made into a thick braid that reached down to his neck. Galau couldn't understand why he had done something that weird. Not that it looked bad, but it was a very popular hairstyle among the pirates.

Was Average trying to get himself killed on the chaotic battlefields?

"I just thought about the unpredictability of fate. How different my life would be if I didn't sit down at that table," Galau wryly smiled as he put down the ledger keeping track of the spoils of the Muscle Brigade.

This family and their shitty naming sense.

"Well, that guy seems to have that effect," Average grimaced as he sat down on the table. "None of us would be in this scary hellhole if not for him. I would have completed my hunt and returned victoriously, and you would have gone back to your clan to live the rest of your life in obscurity."

Galau glared at the annoying teenager, but he quickly retracted his ire. Average might still be F-Grade while Galau had broken through, but the combat strength of the two was miles apart. He had learned that all-too-well during the obligatory sparring sessions of the Muscle Brigade.

"In fact, I heard from fath- I mean the general, that he might be the reason we're out here in this desolate sector," Average added, seemingly not having noticed the scathing look.

"What?" Galau asked with confusion. "What does Zachary Atwood have to do with our brigade?"

"The Stele of Conflict," Average said with some fear in his eyes. "That thing is a treasure far exceeding this whole sector. Even its shadow has great repercussions."

"What does that have to do with us?" Galau asked with mounting worry.

He had barely survived his return from the Tower of Eternity and the subsequent escape from his clan. The elders hadn't wanted to take any chances with scary forces like the Tsarun and Heliophos Clans in the mix, so they planned to simply hand him over and wash their hands clean of the whole situation.

If not for the Peak family he would probably be dead by now. Pretty Peak had honored her agreement, and she sent people to fake his death before sending him far away from his clan. He hadn't expected for her to send him to the Eternal Legion though, and now just two months later he found himself stuck deep in the unclaimed territories outside the borders of the Allbright Empire.

Galau was now called Gubao, named so by Pretty Peak herself, a junior quartermaster under the logistics department of the Muscle Brigade. It was far from his original goal, but it honestly wasn't all bad. These war-hungry lunatics kept fighting with pirates and alien life-forms at any chance given, and weird and valuable resources kept flooding through the logistics department in turn.

He had learned more over the past month compared to a whole year in the Base Town. Besides, his assignment was quite safe, and he never left the warship as it sailed through the Million Gates Territory in search of the Empire's enemies.

"Haven't you heard? We're heading further inside the Million Gates Territory than the Eternal Legion has been for centuries," Average said with building excitement. "We'll reach a wormhole that should take us deep into the heart of the territory in a month. No support system, no safety nets. Just pure chaos and a million roads to power."

"WHAT?!" Galau screamed as he took a step back, feeling that he had almost been physically assaulted. "Wha... Why?"

"I told you. The Stele of Conflict Appeared. The Emperor believes that it was a sign that war is coming. And the first clues have already appeared," Average shrugged.

"Clues?" Galau frowned. "And it's in the middle of the spatial anomalies?"

"Exactly!" Average said. "We're at the forefront of history. Weird spatial fluctuations have been sensed all over the Zecia sector over the past weeks, and they are just increasing in power. The anomalies are particularly powerful in the Million Gates Territory, which isn't surprising considering how unstable the dimensions are here."

Galau took a deep breath as he pushed down the mounting panic in his heart. He had already escaped death a few times now, and he knew that he needed to retain his mental faculties if he was to survive this next calamity.

"What are we looking for?"

"We don't know, but the timing is too coincidental. The fluctuations are so powerful that some teleportations have failed mid-activation, and Mystic Realms are popping up like mushrooms after rain. We are here to investigate if these changes are manmade," Average explained.

"What does that mean?" Galau asked. This was way beyond his knowledge.

"The Emperor fears that a Space Gate is forming, and it's what causing the anomalies," Average whispered after making sure no one else was around.

Galau's eyes widened to saucers as he quickly realized the implications. He didn't know much about conflicts between the powerful, let alone wars between sectors. But he did know one thing. The reason that wars between different sectors were so rare was the exorbitant cost of teleportation.

It might not be too much for a C-Grade Monarch to visit a neighboring Sector, though the cost without a token was still quite prohibitive. But to teleport billions of warriors across the vast emptiness of space, and to maintain logistical lines for millennia in a sector-wide war? Impossible. Even the wealthiest Monarchs would become bankrupt before the war even started.

But things changed completely if a Space Gate appeared. It was like a door connecting two points in space, and walking through it didn't cost a dime. Creating one was completely impossible, at least for the factions living in frontier Sectors.

However, they could appear on their own.

Space was malleable, something that was all-too-apparent in a chaotic area like the Million Gates Territory. It was technically possible for a powerful enough wormhole to appear, creating a connection

between two different sectors. From there you just needed to stabilize it, and you suddenly had a Space Gate that would likely last for tens of thousands of years until it broke apart.

Stabilizing such a wormhole was extremely expensive, but something that a couple of C-Grade powers could stomach if it allowed them to plunder a whole sector. The Zecia Sector.

"And the most likely place for such a wormhole to appear is here, where the spatial barriers are weakened," Galau said with shock.

"Exactly, which means the Albright Empire would be thrust to the frontlines," Average agreed. "We might be powerful, but we can't withstand the force of a whole hostile sector. So we must get to the bottom of what's going on and take proper precautions."

"All because that guy summoned that plaque..?" Galau muttered.

"I mean it's not like Zachary Atwood is related to the weird ripples that are destabilizing the Void to the point that a Space Gate might appear," Average snorted. "But him summoning that Stele is still a pretty bad omen, right?"