

The Fall 638

Chapter 638: Perfection

Zac initially felt reckless for jumping in without thinking things through, but he had pretty much confirmed that the medicinal properties of the liquid were good for him by this point. Seeing as the console was malfunctioning and that the pod was starting up, this might be the last opportunity for him to properly absorb the energy within.

The glaring beeping of the consoles simply disappeared the moment Zac closed the hatch from within. It wasn't only the console, but it was like he had been cut off from the rest of the universe, placed in a small world of his own. The pod had activated the moment the hatch opened, and it was emitting some sort of low-frequency white noise on top of its excellent isolating capabilities.

The low hum didn't only help him shut out his surroundings, but even his mind was quickly calmed as he sank into the viscous liquid. It was like the extreme stress from the past days was just blown away, replaced with soothing tranquility. This feeling alone almost made it worth jumping into the pod, as Zac realized he had desperately needed distress.

It wasn't like he was being hypnotized though. He was in full control of his faculties, and he was constantly observing everything that was going on. The first thing he noticed was that he actually didn't need to breathe inside the liquid. He was somehow getting oxygen by osmosis of the skin or something similar.

Unfortunately, the amount of medicine his body took in from the liquid around him barely trumped what he gained from walking around in the mist outside. Did he need some sort of method to actually absorb it, like a Body Tempering Manual? If that was the case, then he was out of luck.

But a series of lights suddenly lit up within the pod, showering Zac in a warm yellow glow from both above and below. It was like the liquid came alive a second later as torrential streams of medicinal power entered his pores, spreading through his whole body. But Zac frowned as his body was filling up more and more. A small amount of it entered his cells just like the energy in the mist, but most of it was sort of meandering around.

Even worse, a few seconds later the energy started to move out of his body. It felt like the force had tried to do something as it moved about, but it couldn't do it alone. A sudden heartbeat caused a ripple to go through the emerald liquid around him as the [Void Heart] woke up. The escaping energy froze in its tracks, but it didn't actually enter his Hidden Node. It just froze like a deer in headlights, neither advancing or retreating.

More and more energy kept pouring in, and his hidden node kept a steady beat to keep the energy inside his body. It was a relief to see that the valuable serum wasn't wasted, but Zac was quickly starting to feel bloated after just half a minute. The liquid in the pod was still a shimmering green, and Zac understood that if he didn't do something with the energy soon he would have to leave the pod before he exploded.

The issue was that he didn't know how to use the accumulated energy to awaken his bloodline. The information he had gathered on the subject until now was somewhat sparse. Hereditary bloodlines

could emerge in different ways. Some underwent the first awakening in life-threatening situations like a mid-combat epiphany, whereas others were born with it already awakened.

The less talented or those with hard-to-awaken bloodlines could use Body Tempering Manuals as well, and there were treasures and arrays that could help as well. But none of the missives actually broached how to actually use those treasures or arrays, and it clearly wasn't enough to float around in the treasure-water around him.

Zac could only think of one solution at the moment, and he decided to fight fire with fire. A small box appeared in his hand, and he quickly shoved its contents into his mouth and quickly swallow.

It was the [Blood Nucleus], the most valuable treasure he had acquired in the Tower of Eternity that didn't go into the creation of [Love's Bond]. The small rock-like item he had just swallowed was valued at a whopping 20 Billion Nexus Coins, almost rivaling the Pathfinder Oracle Eye that kicked up a storm among the elite scions of the Zecia sector.

It was a risk to swallow a treasure when he was already over capacity of energy in his body, but he felt this was his best opportunity to awaken his bloodline. The odds of finding another intact pod like this felt iffy, especially considering this pod was probably an elite-variant compared to the things the Gemlings had access to in the outer layers.

He needed to take the shot.

A burning surge of power entered his heart a second later, his real heart and not his hidden node. Every beat spread the power of the [Blood Nucleus] through his body, from his thick aortic arteries all the way down to his minuscule capillaries. It felt like he had formed a second energy pathway for a moment, with the new one covering every single inch of his body.

The fierce power in the blood soon entered his cells, and it was like they opened their maws like voracious beasts and quickly started absorbing the medicinal energy trapped in his body. In just seconds the feeling of being overstuffed was replaced with a sense of starvations as his body screamed for more. It was a hunger that reached all the way to the soul, endless greed that made Zac's eyes slowly turn red with want.

Almost invisible ripples were released from his body the next moment, and the liquid in the pod started to rapidly lose its color. Soon it was completely transparent, even more so than the leaked liquid on the ground.

Zac was focused inward, though he could barely concentrate over an all-consuming pain that had erupted across his body. The medicinal energy along with the force hidden in the [Blood Nucleus] acted like some sort of accelerant for his cells, and the cells split and died over and over. It was like Zac was killed and reborn in an endless cycle, each rebirth taking him a bit closer to perfection.

But the process was slowly tapering down.

It felt he was on the cusp of success, but Zac just needed a push to take him all the way. The problem was that he was out of bloodline treasures. Even worse, the feeling of completion was slowly getting weaker, like he had been building a momentum with the pod and the [Blood Nucleus], but that momentum was fading away, amounting to nothing.

He hesitated for a second, but he eventually took out a Vial full of some mysterious liquid. It was something he had found in the Cosmos Sack of the Second Elder of the Cartava Clan. Normally he would have waited to let Calrin or his Sister analyze the thing, but his instincts told him a huge chance would slip out of his fingers if he didn't awaken his bloodline at this moment.

Perhaps it was like when one formed one's Cultivator's Core. The first attempt was the easiest, but it became exponentially harder the next time if you failed. If he failed to rouse his bloodline at this moment, it might be far harder to awaken it in the future. He was already behind schedule in a sense, since the first awakening was normally done in the F-Grade.

More to the point, the hunger that reached his core told him that he needed more. He needed to feed.

So Zac pushed away the pain and put the vial to his mouth with shaky hands. He uncorked the stopper with his teeth next as to not let the liquid mix with the waters in the pod. A burning heat filled his mouth, but Zac could soon recognize the feeling it emitted and he swallowed the contents of the vial in one go. It wasn't a Bloodline Serum, but it was rather some sort of Race-boosting Serum.

It wasn't perfect, but Race and Bloodline should be interrelated considering they shared a row on the status screen. A burning warmth spread throughout his body, and Zac's eyes lit up when he felt it was helping both with the hunger and the process of improving his cells. However, while it was effective it was like feeding a whale with a single shrimp. It definitely wasn't enough.

Zac gritted his teeth and one vial after another was emptied, turning into a fiery inferno in his stomach. He was somewhat guessing that he was currently downing a stockpile that was meant for a whole clan, but now wasn't the time to worry about expenditure. But it was weird. It almost felt like the more he swallowed the more energy-deprived his cells were.

It was like he was trying to feed a million little baby chicks that all screamed for sustenance, and the screams just got more and more piercing the more he fed them. For a moment he started wondering if he was doing something akin to when he poisoned his body with Cosmic Water, but he soon discarded that notion.

This was definitely something different. His body was slowly being refined, with imperfections removed and more in line with his bloodline. And he already had strong suspicions that his bloodline was related to absorption based on his Hidden Nodes. Each time his cells were reborn, they were able to swallow more energy before they split apart. That alone felt like proof that Zac was heading in the right direction.

As long as he ate enough he would become perfect.

The bottom of the pod was soon littered with vials, and the white liquid had turned into a weird brown sludge. Part of it was because of Zac's body expelling large amounts of impurities, both through his pores and through Zac cutting open some wounds to bleed them out. Not everything he fished out of his Spatial Rings or Cosmos Sack was suitable for the situation.

Some were healing serums, and others were materials that Zac suspected to be raw ingredients meant for blacksmithing or something else. But it almost felt like anything that contained non-poisonous energy was happily swallowed by his cells. Of course, that meant that his [Void Heart] first had to make

the energies extractable, and Zac only had so much blood he could exsanguinate to rid himself of dangerous impurities.

He was shocked at how much energy his body had swallowed. It was like every cell in his body was turning into Nodes, a vast subdimension seemingly capable of storing an untold amount of energy. But even after gobbling up almost everything in the Cartava Clan's Cosmos Sacks that seemed beneficial, it still wasn't enough.

Zac was delirious with hunger still, and he eventually took out the intricate box housing his spiritual [Four Gates Pill]. He had held onto this magical node-opening pill for so long, but it looked it was time to take a chance. His body was screaming for more, and this should be the most energy-dense item in his possession.

A huge pulse rippled out from his body as a golden warmth erupted like a sun in his stomach, causing the mists outside the pod to churn with even greater ferocity. The power hidden in that unassuming pill was simply shocking, and it shot toward a Node in his arm. However, another thump from [Void Heart] stopped the medicinal force in its tracks, and it was instead ripped apart and absorbed by the greedy cells all over his body.

It was like his cells had gained a golden hue, and Zac's eyes were turning bloodshot as he kept going, feeling he was getting ever closer to perfection. Everything was soon turning muddled, except one undeniable truth that shone in the darkness of Zac's mind; he needed more. Pills, Crystals, Raw Materials. Everything became yet another sacrificial tribute to the altar of his Bloodline.

Just as his absorption increased, so did the chaotic ripples that spread out of his body. Zac was quickly losing grip on reality, and it felt like he was being controlled by a hidden hand as he bit into a branch from the bush with yellow berries he harvested just a few minutes ago.

But finally, there was a change. It was like everything suddenly clicked into place, and Zac slowly started to push away the clouds muddling his mind. Sweat poured down his back as he realized what he had just done. What was that? That insatiable hunger just now had almost turned him insane. His mouth was full of the taste of iron from the countless wounds he had gained from chowing down on everything from lumps of metal to whole plants.

There was no time to cleanse his stomach from what was no doubt an extremely dangerous mix of treasures though, as his voracious feast had yielded results. Something was changing in his body, and his body erupted with a foreign and terrifying power. The medicinal pod was turned to scrap metal from the explosion, but the clouds in the lab were still swallowed into his body rather than pushed away.

Zac tried to get to his feet, but he was shocked to realize that was completely unable to move. He lay frozen in place as the whole room was drained of every morsel of energy, but he could still see his surroundings. And it was with mounting horror he saw an enormous vortex emerge from his body.

The whole mountain wall was ripped apart and swallowed a second later, exposing him to the outside.

Zac felt a wave of pleasure entering him as the Memorysteel was disintegrated into its base elements and turned into nourishment, and the flame of hunger woke up again. He was rapidly losing grip, but he could still see the familiar faces appearing some distance away. He wanted to tell the shocked spectators to run, but his mouth didn't work.

The world around soon turned hazy apart from glowing blobs of sustenance, and they were all inexorably dragged toward the vortex behind his back. The more he absorbed the better he would be, and when all existence was swallowed he would become the Heavens themselves.

He had become the Void.