

The Fall 652

Chapter 652: Inner Chambers

The Dimensional Seed had been the ultimate goal for so many people since its existence was discovered, and Zac was finally standing right in front of it. Just looking in its general direction made Zac's mind scatter again, forcing him to turn his head away. The treasure might not be actively dangerous to interact with, but there was still a vast chasm in terms of grades between them.

It was just like with himself; if he completely unleashed his aura next to someone at Level 1, they would probably die from the pressure. And the difference between him and someone who hadn't started cultivating was probably a lot smaller than the difference between him and the object hovering two hundred meters in the air.

Zac didn't know what he expected the spatial treasure to look like, but he did realize that taking this thing might have been a fool's dream. First of all, he wasn't even sure he would be able to even get close considering how intense its energy fluctuations were. Secondly, it was pretty big, much too big for the box he had spent an exorbitant amount of money on.

The Dimensional Seed looked like a pulsating black hole, whose oscillations contained the breath of pure Dao in a way that made Zac's brain almost short-circuit when he tried to understand what he was looking at. Its diameter fluctuated between ten and thirty meters, so unless there was some sort of smaller core in the heart of that anomaly there was no way it'd fit inside the box. Not that snatching this thing was his main goal.

Besides, it felt all-too-apparent after seeing this treasure that it would bring more problems than it was worth. Something emitting spatial fluctuations this powerful probably couldn't be stowed away in a Spatial Ring, and it was only a matter of time before some old monster learned of it and became greedy.

A treasure like the [Eye of Har'Theriam] was extremely rare and had amazing effects, but its use was ultimately limited to E-Grade juniors. Yet it had caused Yrial endless troubles when it was exposed. The thing in the heart of the chamber was clearly meant for higher-grade cultivators, and Zac couldn't even imagine what kind of storm such an item would elicit.

Zac shook his head and instead started to inspect the rest of the enormous chamber. There seemed to be a thousand pillars rising from the ground, all of them pointing toward the Dimensional Seal in the air. They were roughly five meters across at their base, but they turned to thin spears at the end. It was the same with the domed walls and ceiling, with spikes hundreds of meters long all pointing toward the heart of the room. There was even one twenty meters above their heads, angled upward.

The spikes weren't placed completely uniform though, and Zac almost got lost in thought as he looked at them. It felt like there was some hidden meaning to the pattern they created, like they formed some sort of array. The meaning was far beyond his understanding, but Zac had an idea what they were there for; to suspend and seal the Dimensional Seal.

The pulsating anomaly was trapped inside a sphere seemingly made from thousands of different Daos. Each pulse made the barrier flutter, but it was clear that the containment shield was stopping most of the energies from escaping. Perhaps it would have been impossible for them to stand in this place without the pillars keeping the treasure sealed up.

One thing that made the thousands of spears stand out from all other Technocrat tech Zac had encountered so far was that they seemed to run on something other than Base Power, or that plasma energy that the Little Bean used. It was rather Dao that ran through the metallic spears. It wasn't Spatial Dao though like what the Dimensional Seed emitted, but rather all kinds of mysterious energies.

It made Zac realize that it might not actually be the Dimensional Seed that was the source of those ripples before, at least not the sole source.

"This..." Kenzie whispered as she looked around with shock in her eyes. "It's so similar..."

"Similar to what?" Zac asked with confusion since he had never seen anything like this.

"Ah? Nothing," Kenzie shrugged.

Zac slowly nodded before he turned to Rhubat.

"Can you sense something? Are they here?" Zac asked.

With hundreds of thick pillars covering the ground, visibility was even worse than in a forest and Zac couldn't see further than a hundred meters on the ground. A whole army could be loitering on the other side of the innermost chamber without them having any idea of it.

Not only that, but the spears also gave off a weird humming white noise that made it hard to just hear each other when standing next to each other. Zac would probably be able to scream at the top of his lungs without exposing their location.

"We can't sense anything. Between these pillars and the treasure itself, our senses are almost completely blinded," Rhubat said with a shake of its head. "It's like standing in the middle of a sandstorm."

Zac hesitantly looked around the chamber once more, not sure what they should do next.

"Let's scout out the room, make sure we're the only one here. Perhaps we can set up a trap if we can figure out where the others will come from," Zac eventually said.

The group didn't spread out in case there really were others in this place, rather opting to stay together as they walked between the spears. A few of them emitted Daos that felt completely foreign to Zac, whereas others felt a bit more familiar. He gazed at the thousands of spears, and he couldn't help but wonder if all the main branches of the Dao under the System were represented in this chamber.

Was it perhaps possible to find the pillars that were related to his own path and use them to progress further?

"They are powered by Origin Dao," Kenzie murmured. "It's not true insight, but rather a forced mimicry... Still..."

"What!" Rhubat suddenly exclaimed, starting Kenzie out of her musings. "There is someone inside the anomaly!"

"Impossible," Ogras blurted as his eyes darted up, but he was immediately forced to look away again.

Zac tried to forcibly look at the Dimensional Seed with [Cosmic Gaze] to see what Rhubat was talking about, but it was even worse than staring straight into the sun. Kenzie summoned a handful of drones, and a video feed appeared on her screen as she tapped away. The image kept shifting like she was adding various filters, and Zac's eyes widened when he could see a vague outline of a person for a moment.

Someone was really sitting on top of the Dimensional Seed and was hidden by the powerful emanations.

"It's true!" Kenzie exclaimed. "They are even inside that inner shield! How can anyone withstand that?!"

"Their auras are converging," Rhubat said with a frown, and a few other Anointed nodded after they closed their eyes. "I barely sensed it. I think the person inside is trying to fuse with the item, or at least form a connection to it. It has to be Adcarkas. Who else has that kind of capability?"

"Is the bad guy eating that ball?" Billy muttered with wide eyes. "Scary."

"More like suicidal," Ogras muttered with disbelief. "But if he somehow succeeds..."

"We can't let that happen," Zac said with grit teeth as his gaze moved to one of the pillars sticking out from the wall. "Get ready for battle, there is no time to lose."

"Those are the eyes of someone about to do something foolish," Ogras said. "Don't act hastily."

"He is probably in a trance at the moment since he sits there unmoving, but he might wake up we start experimenting on ways of dragging him down. I'll have to go all out from the start," Zac said as he turned to his sister. "That Dao-shield, can I pass through it?"

"What? You want to enter that thing? The barrier seems to only restrain the energies the seed emits, but that means the aura is far stronger inside. You might die just from the aura alone if you jump through," Kenzie said with worry.

"I don't believe I'll instantly die if that guy can comfortably sit up there," Zac muttered. "I should at least be able to drag him down. There's no time to waste. Be ready to unleash some powerful strikes. Perhaps we can kill him in one go."

"I still think-" Kenzie tried to interject, but Zac just shook his head as he readied his axe and shield.

"We will not fail you, Warmaster," Rhubat rumbled, and the auras of all the Anointed started to rise, a telltale sign of them activating their life-burning method.

Billy prepared himself as well, as his usually silly expression was replaced with steely determination. Even Ogras had discarded his lackadaisical demeanor as he slowly melded with the surroundings, his spear already in his hand.

Zac took a last steadying breath before he disappeared, and a deep indent appeared on one of the long spikes a moment later as he used it as a launching pad to shoot into the air. However, he didn't fly straight toward the Dimensional Seed, but rather making it look like he would miss it by fifty meters just in case Void's Disciple was actually observing their moves.

However, just as it looked like he would shoot straight past the floating treasure a barely noticeable patch of grass appeared under his right foot, and he suddenly disappeared. Space constricted as he took

a step through shrunken space, and he pushed straight through the Dao barrier and toward the barely visible figure inside the black energy emanations.

The halo of [Conformation of Supremacy] had already appeared behind him, filling him with a sense of power as the Everlasting Shield radiated a world-crushing weight. If it really was Adcarkas sitting inside, then Zac had already cut this guy in two once without much success. So he figured he'd try to crush him instead this time around, and if it failed the force should at least be powerful enough to knock him down from the dimensional seed.

However, Zac completely lost control of his skill the moment he entered the anomaly, and it felt like his whole body was disintegrating as immensely powerful Spatial Energies threatened to rip him apart. Zac's perception of reality was being put through the wringer and his whole body was being expanded to the size of a galaxy one moment, only for it to be shrunk into the size of an atom the next.

This was way beyond what he had endured when the Mystic Realm underwent those massive upheavals, over ten times worse. Even his soul was unable to maintain its integrity and was being bent and twisted like a piece of clay. Zac was completely helpless as he shot forward. The containment shield was just fifty meters across, but that short journey felt even longer than flying to the moon.

Alien energies threatened to completely rip his body apart, but the welcome beat of his hidden node suddenly echoed out in the darkness. This was why Zac had some confidence in attempting this. His [Void Heart] even dared to eat the tribulation lightning of the Heavens themselves, so what was some energy run-off from a C-Grade treasure? The hidden node happily gobbled up mouthfuls of the spatial energies, which gave Zac back some of his presence of mind.

Zac's plan had already failed, but he thankfully had a backup. He hurriedly infused [Love's Bond] with the Fragment of the Coffin to toughen it up even further. A shudder went through Zac's body as he felt a collision, which was immediately followed by a startled roar of anger before the world turned back to normal.

[Loamwalker] was not an actual teleportation-skill like Ogras' shadow-walk, which had both positives and negatives. In this case, it was an asset as his momentum was real when he shot forward from the floating patch of grass. Zac had lost all sense of his surroundings for a while there, but he was moving straight toward the meditating person, and his shield was pretty massive.

His momentum had made him not only knock the person off the Dimensional Seed but also pushed both of them out of the containment shield. His senses were still all messed up even if [Void Heart] had swallowed most of the terrifying Spatial Energies, and his vision and perception of space were still all messed up. He tried to grab his target, but he only grasped empty air for a few seconds until he slammed down onto the hard metal floor.

Thankfully Zac was not alone. Someone dragged a nigh-delirious Zac away just in time before twenty enormous seals slammed down as one, causing even the extremely sturdy golden alloy to dent. It was immediately followed by a hulking smash by a roaring Billy who had already grown to ten meters.

The Titan immediately started charging a second strike, and the moment the massive club was lifted from the ground over fifty drones shot at the same spot, the combined force of their lasers almost tearing a hole in space itself.

An endless barrage of shadow-spears kept up the pressure on the spot until a meter-thick lance of pure darkness shot the target, swallowing everything whole. An even more powerful follow-up swing from Billy kept the combo going, and the echoes of metallic clangor echoed out. The Anointed kept attacking the unmoving body as well, unleashing millennia of pent-up fury.

Zac could finally tell left from right as stumbled back on his feet, and he realized that he had been dragged right next to his sister. He nodded at her before he looked over at the carnage with a frown.

Something was wrong.

The target hadn't even moved or as much as activated a defense as far Zac could tell, but why didn't they die? Even Zac wouldn't survive an onslaught like that unless he blocked them somehow. A piercing scream of danger forced Zac into action, and he desperately flashed out of the way while dragging his sister with him.

It was just in time as well as a hand appeared out of nowhere, grabbing straight for his throat with enough force to make the air twist.

"Back away," Zac whispered to his sister as he stared at the attacker with confusion and some trepidation. "Why is it you?!"