

## The Fall 658

### Chapter 658: Ragnarok

Fragments of the Memorysteel were twisted and pushed away as the impossibly long tentacles of the Collector snaked their way closer and closer to the heart of the broken Memorysteel planet. Where Zac and his sister were still located. Zac was almost completely out of juice as the nourishing effect of activating the Pink Flash only helped him so much. But a primal fear urged him on, and he ran as fast as he could along with the Memorysteel fragment he was standing on.

A sharp alarm of danger erupted in his mind out of nowhere, and he only had time to shield his sister with his body before a tremendous ripple was released from the Dimensional Seed. This ripple was completely different compared to the nurturing ones they had enjoyed inside the hidden realm though. It was full of offensive power, and Zac felt over a dozen bones shatter as he was flung forward.

Even more shocking, the ripple was filled with what could best be described as sentience, and he got a sense of fear and rage from the energies. It was like the treasure was alive, and one ripple after another was released by the Dimensional Seed.

Zac felt more bones in his body break as the second ripple slammed into him, and he coughed up a mouthful of blood. His organs were in disarray after the two consecutive attacks, the damage even worse than all the wounds from the fight inside the hidden realm. And of course, there was no time to sit down and activate [Surging Vitality].

Knowing When to Back Down (Training (9/9)): Avoid the clash between supreme beings for long enough to be teleported out of the collapsing Taboo Realm. Reward: Reward based on performance at the end of training regimen. (0/1)

Zac looked with confusion at the screen that suddenly appeared in front of him, the surprise even making him forget the pain for a second. He had actually received a second final quest? But the quest didn't fill him with gratitude, but rather ire. More than anything, it felt like proof that the System was up to no good when it awarded the last quest, while this was the real one.

Or was the quest before a hidden test? He had gotten the training quests because of his Pathstrider-title, and perhaps the System was testing him if his belief in his Path was sturdy, or if he would throw it away the moment he was put in front of a valuable treasure. Or was the System simply going insane like Brazla and gave incoherent and opposing orders?

It was impossible to tell, but there was no inner conflict this time around at least since the objective was exactly what he planned on doing anyway. He knew that he couldn't take too many more of those ripples, but he had thankfully reached the edge of the Memorysteel shard by that point, and he desperately jumped down even if he hadn't scouted out what was below. After all, it couldn't be any worse than what he was suffering right now.

Zac glanced back as he jumped down the fragment, and he saw how huge sections in the sky had been completely disintegrated, the Memorysteel turned into dust while even space itself had broken down completely. Clearly, he and his sister weren't the true targets of the treasure's outbursts. Had they been attacked with that kind of force, they would be gone with no chance of survival.

The Dimensional Seed was trying to fight off the Collector.

However, the tentacles of the Collector were only slightly wounded as they inched closer to the Dimensional Seed. The creature had lost some of its stitched-on-hands, but Zac was shocked to see that the remaining ones formed some sort of seals that created some sort of energy fluctuations that looked pretty efficient at dispersing the spatial ripples.

Was this the true purpose of the limbs attached to its body? Zac had assumed it was to better withstand the main dimension, but was the real reason perhaps to create an armor? An armor that could withstand the spatial attacks of the Dimensional Seed, or at least decrease the effect of its attacks long enough so that the creature could snatch it.

In either case, this wasn't a battle that Zac could intrude upon. That would be like an ant jumping in between two lions. He definitely didn't want The Collector to get its hands on the Dimensional Seed if Ogras and the others really were alive in there, but what could he do?

"Warmaster," a weak voice exclaimed, and Zac looked over in surprise to see Rhubat lying on a piece of Memorysteel, bleeding cracks covering their whole body.

"Hang on!" Zac said as he shot a chain toward the neighboring fragment, dragging himself and Kenzie over.

Rhubat was in an even worse state than himself, and Zac hurriedly pushed a handful of healing pills into their mouth.

"Let's keep descending. We need to get away from the battle above," Zac said as he lifted the Anointed with another of his chains.

"What about the others?!" Kenzie interjected, though there wasn't much conviction in her voice.

"They all had Spatial Seals," Zac said. "Our only hope is that they'll be teleported out with the rest of us. As for us, there is nothing we can-"

"WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!" an enraged roar that contained enough force to cause small cracks in his soul made Zac stumble with his words, and he once more looked to the sky as he felt a tremendous pressure descend upon him. Kenzie and Rhubat were even worse off, with the Anointed immediately getting knocked out.

Space bent through some unknown means and a five-hundred-meter-long sleek vessel full of power appeared out of nowhere. Just looking at it filled Zac's heart with trepidation, and he instantaneously understood that it was at least a peak D-Grade vessel, perhaps even C-Grade. It was a proper Cosmic Vessel, the first one that he had ever seen.

However, not only was it already pretty badly damaged when it broke into this dimension, but the location where it appeared was definitely unlucky. It was right between the enraged Dimensional Seed and the Collector's limbs, and it immediately found itself assailed from two directions in a spot where the laws of space were falling apart. Extremely powerful shields sprung up around it, but it was clear that the barriers wouldn't last long judging by their flickering.

Suddenly, an avatar twice as large as the whole vessel appeared, forcibly pushing back not only the hundreds of tentacles. It even forcibly stabilized the crumbling dimensional layers around it. An old man and a hooded being soon emerged from the wreckage, and Zac's eyes widened in terror when he saw the man's face.

It was The Great Redeemer, in the flesh this time.

How was this possible?! Zac had completed the quest, cutting the last thread of Karma by killing Void's Disciple. The quest had been completed and he had even used the karma-erasing compound and corpse-destroying powder just to be sure, removing any trace of their existence. Yet Vordis A'Heliophos stood here, radiating a cold and cruel aura, far surpassing even the pressure that Greatest exuded back when they met on that desolate planet.

Were they too late, and he had already zoned in on this place by the time Adcarkas died?

Zac quickly turned away out of fear that The Great Redeemer would sense his gaze, and started escaping with newfound vigor. If a battle between two supreme beings was a deathtrap, then adding another one would obviously only make things worse.

Unfortunately, it quickly became clear that restraining one's aura and hiding behind Memorysteel fragments was insufficient to avoid detection of a peak D-Grade Hegemon. The floating shards between Zac and the Dimensional Seed suddenly just floated away, creating a clear line of sight for the Karmic Cultivator.

'We meet again, Zachary Atwood,' a voice echoed in his mind with enough force to make him puke out blood. 'I don't know how you managed to reroute the threads of Karma to this crumbling dimension and then cut them, but nothing can save you now.'

Zac didn't answer the taunt, remembering Ogras' warnings about forming new threads of fate. All his focus was on finding a way to survive long enough to get teleported out of this place with the help of his Spatial Seal. That was his last hope. The Karmic threads had been severed, and this realm was collapsing. Hopefully, that would be enough for Vordis A'Heliophos to lose the trail, and if not, enough time to escape from Earth with a Teleportation Token.

'An infant Dimensional Seed? I've only heard of such an item in legends, no wonder the spatial ripples almost destroyed my vessel. It looks like you've brought me a tremendous gift indeed,' the sinister voice continued in Zac's mind. 'Perhaps there's no need to turn you into a fulcrum. But I am still curious what allowed a progenitor to reach the 9th floor of the Tower of Eternity after a few scant months of cultivation. I'll deal with this miscreation first, then I'll slowly find out what secrets your body hold. For now...'

Zac suddenly felt a sharp scream of danger, and he turned around to see that the old man was pointing a finger in his direction, and a small rune was forming on his fingertip. Just looking at the rune filled Zac with dread. At best it was a tracking rune, at worst it was some sort of slave seal.

A surprising turn of events took place the next moment as the hooded being suddenly turned to a blur, launching straight at his companion while desperately swiping at the rune. Zac couldn't understand why that stranger would help him, but he would definitely make the most of it as he tried to increase the distance even further while preparing his last ace.

The hooded cultivator was, unfortunately, no match for the Great Redeemer, and he soon started wailing as he held his head in agony. It looked like his soul was being tortured, and a wave of Voridis' sleeve was all that was needed to push away the hundred-meter-thick Memorysteel plateaus that Zac had tried to hide behind again.

The rune shot out, causing a white streak in the air that even passed by unbothered by a massive spatial ripple released from the Dimensional Seed, and it headed straight for Zac who glared back at it with wild eyes. Brutal energies churned in his body as he squeezed every last morsel of Oblivion he could from his soul, and a small bronze flash appeared between his hands.

It had only been a few days since he used the skill against the Collector, so he hadn't had much time to siphon any of the energy from the remnant in his mind. But it was the best idea he had, and he pushed the small ball of pure destruction toward the rune.

An extremely bright flash illuminated the area, and both rune and Annihilation Sphere was gone the next moment, while Zac was left with a cracked body that bled all over.

"What?!" Voridis exclaimed, but his eyes lit up with elation rather than anger. "Such a pure source of destruction!"

He pointed toward Zac once more, and he could only look on with despair while trying to nudge the Spatial Seal on his hand to activate early. He was all out of energy and all out of tricks, and he could only feebly try to move further away with his last two chains since his legs wouldn't listen to him any longer.

[High-grade Life!] a thunderous voice suddenly roared as the ten-mile-wide dust clouds in the air congealed into a huge face with a distinctive pattern in its forehead.

It was the Administrator, apparently born anew, and it looked like he wanted to capture The Great Redeemer as thousands of massive spikes appeared around the old cultivator and his vessel.

"Machine-God Faction?" Voridis frowned, and the avatar once more appeared to protect its master.

The two didn't even have a chance to clash though as hundreds of tentacles tried to ensnare the Administrator, The Great Redeemer, and Dimensional Seed alike. It was like the tentacles formed a pattern that locked space itself.

Zac floated further and further away, his eyes looking at the clash of auras with wide eyes. Was this what a fight between D-Grade Hegemons looked like? Even he was grievously wounded just by some errant energy fluctuations, and that was at a distance of thousands of meters before they had even gotten serious.

He would probably have died in seconds if he stood in the middle of those auras they released.

Space itself was giving way to the will of the three entities, but a sudden ripple broke the stalemate as the Dimensional Seed moved with impossible speed. A small vortex appeared in front of it, and suddenly it was gone. But Zac didn't even get the chance to react before the shimmering crystal appeared right in front of him shot straight into his body.

"No!" the Great Redeemer roared with anger as he saw his ticket to monarchy get absorbed by someone else, but he found himself unable to do anything about it as he was completely trapped by the Collector and the Administrator.

The Collector clearly saw Vordis as a huge threat to seizing the Dimensional Seed, so most of its endless tentacles trapped the old cultivator while a few snaked toward Zac. The Great Redeemer obviously wasn't willing to let a beast snatch his item, so he started ripping one tentacle after another apart. As for Zac himself, they probably only saw him as a temporary receptacle for an item he had no business controlling.

Meanwhile, the Administrator seemed more interested in studying The Great Redeemer than the Dimensional Seed for the moment, so it kept its needle-cage erect, which directly helped Zac against the cultivator at least. Of course, The Collector was far too big to be entrapped, and many of its tentacles reached around from different directions.

Zac was in a frantic state, but he soon calmed down a bit as he felt a weak sensation from the crystal that had entered his body; gratitude. Zac didn't quite understand what the Dimensional Seed was grateful about, but it had clearly helped him since it had somehow modified space between himself and the old hegemony.

They were still close, but his senses told Zac that they were endlessly far away, like a vast chasm had cut them apart. The tentacles frantically moved, but it simultaneously looked like they had been locked in place. Zac looked at the scene with relief and wonder, but his attention was soon forced back to his own body as a storm of extremely powerful energies appeared out of nowhere.

The energy density was far beyond what he could handle, especially in his extremely weakened state. Using the Mark of Creation had actually helped a bit with the weird cracks from the Annihilation sphere, but forcibly activating another oblivion-fueled attack had immediately reopened the wounds again.

Thankfully the primal energies the Dimensional Seed released didn't hurt him at all. It was as though the spatial treasure had controlled it to become more benign. Some of it was immediately swallowed by his cells, and even more entered his two Hidden Nodes who greedily swallowed it like it was some sort of delicious treat.

Zac tried to find where the seed itself was hiding, but he soon realized that it had already left his body after releasing a fraction of the energies it contained, effortlessly breaking past the pull of [Void Heart]. It had released such a fearful surge of energy into his body, but it hadn't been weakened at all.

It made Zac doubly thankful he hadn't really tried branding the thing; even if he had succeeded, there was no way he'd be able to control that terrifying crystal without the System taking charge. And Zac definitely didn't want yet another fractal cage inside his body that loomed over him like a ticking time bomb.

But the gift had been imparted, and Zac's thoughts moved like lightning as he considered what he should do with it. Letting it seep into his cells and Two Hidden nodes wasn't bad as it clearly Strengthened him all-around, and a glance at his Bloodline-screen showed that his bloodline talent actually had increased to 20% in just a second.

But wasn't this an opportunity? If a Dimensional Seed could help cultivators open up an internal world, then surely Zac should be able to use a fraction of the energy to accomplish something much simpler?

A weak resonance pulsed in his lower spine, and Zac immediately started pushing. The energy left behind was thankfully quite malleable, and a storm of power poured into a specific spot on his lower back. A burst of extremely sharp pain spread through his bones, but it passed almost immediately. Left behind was a small vortex, previously hidden between two of his vertebrae; his third Hidden Node.

Zac's vision started closing in as he felt another Bloodline Vision coming on, or perhaps it was just his body that was finally pushed beyond its limit after the visit of a C-Grade Treasure. The last Zac saw was the small Dimensional Seed moving tens of kilometers in an instant before it somehow cracked reality like a mirror. An infuriated roar caused another shock to his mind, and the darkness crept ever closer.

'It's not over!'

The Dimensional Seed disappeared through the cracks, and the universe crumbled as his sister and Rhubat turned into golden motes of light.