

## The Fall 659

### Chapter 659: On the Horizon

Zac woke up with a start, but he immediately regretted the sudden movement as sharp pangs of pain wracked his body. He had fallen asleep again, his own body's way to forcibly try to make him rest. His pathways were a mess, and his body was completely wrung dry. He was so weak, like his body had been ravaged by illness for weeks.

He felt extremely lucky to have opened his third Hidden Node, [Purity of the Void], just before he was sent out of the Mystic Realm. He had actually missed the vision due to exhaustion, and he only remembered fragmented pieces of the man on the meteor. But the effect of the node spoke from itself.

Every ten minutes or so it released a mysterious pulse that shook loose small amounts of impurities, which apparently included everything from foreign Dao to Pill Toxicity, from his cells, which then entered his bloodstream. As his blood passed the node, some of the impurities were swallowed, never to return.

[Purity of the Void] essentially formed a perfect cultivation system with [Void Heart], where one node helped him absorb all kinds of energy while the other made sure his foundations didn't worsen. It was still best to exsanguinate himself when his body was flooded by impurities, but that was ultimately a crude method that only worked on some of the gunk in his body.

Still, Zac was far from shedding all the toxins left from the [Rageroot Oak Seed] and the mysterious spike, and some of Adcarkas' foreign Dao lingered in his body. He had already checked himself with [Spiritual Anchor], and there thankfully weren't any new brands hidden as far as he could tell.

He took a deep shuddering breath as he gazed across the vast forests of his island from the mountain peak he had made into his observatory. Still nothing. Two weeks had passed since their return from the Mystic Realm, and there was still no sign of Voridis A'Heliophos. There was no way for Zac to be certain, but it really looked like The Great Redeemer had no way to find Earth through the Integration Shroud now that the Karmic Links were cut and the Mystic Realm destroyed.

As for the old bastard being dead, Zac didn't hold much hope. A Peak D-Grade warrior was extremely difficult to kill unless there was a massive power gap, and that went doubly true for a Karmic Cultivator. Unless the Collector had some extremely powerful hidden means it unleashed after Zac was teleported out, then Voridis had probably left on the crumpled Cosmic Vessel in search of another world to devour.

At least that was the assumption Zac was operating under. The threat might be averted, but only temporarily. Voridis' final, furious roar still echoed in his mind. Their hard work had hopefully gained them a century of safety, but Zac knew he wasn't in any position to relax. He needed to do everything in his power to come up with some method to deal with the lingering threat.

Of course, the most surefire way was to gain enough power to hunt down and kill The Great Redeemer outright. There was a long road ahead until Zac could reach that point though, especially if the old bastard somehow managed to break through to C-Grade.

For now, there were other things to take care of.

Zac got up on his feet and started to slowly walk down toward the teleportation array at the edge of the hidden valley, somewhat regretting his decision to keep watch at such a high altitude. The trip that normally would take a minute took half an hour, but he eventually managed to return to his compound where he walked over to his sister's residence.

There was no one inside the gardens or in one of the living rooms, and Zac sighed as he walked over to one of the workshops. The door was ajar, and he heard some whizzing sounds from within, which meant that Kenzie was once again hard at work with her machines.

It looked like Jeeves had finally woken up again after deactivating the Administrator for a few minutes.

"How are you doing?" Zac hesitantly asked as he walked inside.

"Jeeves isn't able to make any deductions of what happened to the Dimensional Seed and those within, and upgrading him is still far away. We figured we might be able to increase the calculating power with these computers. I read that most space simulations on old Earth used these kinds of things to make accurate models," Kenzie muttered without taking her eyes off her work. "And these machines seem pretty high-quality, even by Technocrat standard. Far beyond the technology that went into those machines you got me from the Incursion."

"Uh, the Administrator isn't hiding inside these computers, right?" Zac asked as he looked at the Supercomputers with worry.

"No, these computers are just there for simulations, but they can't actually store an AI," Kenzie snorted, like that was something obvious. "Remember that sun-like ball? That was the AI's core."

"Alright..." Zac sighed. "Don't forget about your own cultivation though. You can't only rely on tech in this world."

Kenzie made a noncommittal grunt as she kept working, and Zac mutely looked on for a few seconds, unsure how to deal with the situation. She had at least snapped out of the morose state she had been in since they returned. It was a big blow to them both when Ogras wasn't transported out with them, and neither was Billy.

It almost felt like Zac had lost a limb now that the demon wasn't around any longer. Sure, Ogras was sometimes self-serving and a bit narcissistic, but he was also someone Zac felt he could trust his back to, something that had been irrevocably proven by his final selfless action.

Billy didn't deserve to go out like that either. The gentle giant had fought tirelessly to without a word of complaint, unhesitantly lending his aid against terrifying beings like Adcarkas. For him to have been taken while so many egotistical and self-serving remained alive on Earth felt like an affront to the core purpose of the System itself.

Kenzie still maintained that they definitely were alive, but Zac didn't know what he believed. There were life-treasures in the Multiverse that could tell whether someone had died while out adventuring, but no one on Earth had something like that. Of course, if someone could survive getting swallowed by a spatial treasure, then it was the scheming demon.

And if someone could figure out a way to bring Ogras back, it was his AI-empowered sister.

Zac still hadn't told her about his lingering suspicions that the System was gunning for her, and he still wasn't sure if telling was the right thing. First of all, it was just a hypothesis of his, but perhaps it was just his paranoia taking over.

But if the System really was going after her, then it was obviously not because she fiddled around with some low-grade drones and random found tech. It was because of Jeeves, and getting rid of that thing was impossible. So telling her might not serve any purpose except to push her even deeper into the rabbit hole.

"I'll leave you to it," Zac eventually said. "Let me know if there's anything I can do. If they're alive, we'll definitely save them even if we have to turn the whole sector upside-down."

"Right," Kenzie nodded as she turned back. "There is actually something. We finally realized how to upgrade Jeeves after visiting that isolation chamber. We are going to need a lot of materials. A lot of them."

"Well, hopefully, my new reward can help," Zac, feebly smiled, hating the fact that Kenzie sometimes spoke in a 'we' as of late.

"If people knew, they'd be green with envy," Kenzie snorted, not noticing Zac's antipathy toward her actions. "Perhaps even more than your weird core."

The reward she was talking about was the one he got from finishing the Training Quest chain. Part of the rewards were definitely all the valuables he picked up along the way, and the fact that he managed to save most of his people. He did voluntarily skip the biggest gain, the Dimensional Seed, but the System did thankfully award him something else instead.

Access.

When Zac returned from the Mystic Realm his Teleportation Screen had drastically changed, with an endless number of places added. Altogether there were over seven hundred thousand towns on the list, and it had taken Abby over a week to confirm where they led.

He had essentially been given access to various D-Grade worlds all over the Sector, ranging from hundreds of options in the massive empires like Allbright and Dravorak, to locations he had never heard of before. Not only that, but it even looked like the System was giving him a hefty discount of over 70%, which would save him billions compared to if he used the Teleportation Tokens he had amassed.

It was a bit of a shame that the System had excluded all C-Grade continents and racial empires like the Demon Horde and the local chapter of the Undead Empire, but it was still a shocking number of amazing places to visit.

What was it that limited most cultivators in the end? It was access. Even D-Grade cultivators often found themselves stuck at their home planet or to the local cluster of planets. Zac had a bunch of Tokens because he passed the 9th floor of the Tower of Eternity, but most people had no way to ever leave their own backyard.

And even if you got a Teleportation Token like Zac, it usually ended up being a one-time thing. Teleporting back home again meant having lost your chance. So, the few who got a Token through quests or from greater factions usually cut ties with their home planet to continue their cultivation.

Only the luckier lived in a powerful place that controlled small wormholes or had access to families with wide networks or who owned Cosmic Vessels that could traverse the Sector. But Zac had suddenly been given the keys to the kingdom, to the point that he could go almost anywhere, and without relying on the Tokens which might alert people of his presence.

Between the access and his [Spatial Gate Array], his mobility might be one of the greatest in the whole sector, which would not only improve his survivability, but also his ability to accrue further advantages for his cultivation. It almost felt like the System opened the door when it provided him with golem guardians and the escape bracelet, and now it was kicking him out to go explore.

The question was if he was ready.

Zac left his sister to her devices. Exhausted by even this small amount of exercise he walked over to the ocean and sat down on a rattan sofa he'd left behind. He had spent a lot of time looking out at the waves as he slowly recuperated over the past days. A clap of thunder rumbled in the distance, and it almost echoed the turbulence in his own heart.

The battle between the titans in the Mystic Realm had really left a deep impact on him, and he still remembered the feelings of helplessness and despair. And here were millions of people just as powerful as The Great Redeemer out there, and Zac wouldn't be able to rely on some Spatial Seal teleporting him to safety the next time.

"What are you thinking about?" a familiar voice drifted over.

"I guess I'm thinking about what to do next," Zac shrugged.

"So what's the plan?" Thea asked as she sat down next to him and snaked her arm around his.

The wind buffeted his short hair, and he took a deep breath of the salty air. He couldn't believe that just over a year had passed since the integration. So much had happened, and he had been forced to run back and forth to put out one fire after another. Now that things were finally over and there were no direct threats, he almost felt lost.

But Zac's gaze soon hardened as he looked out at the thunderstorm. There was no such thing as a final storm, and there was no such thing as absolute safety in the Multiverse. At least not until you stood at the top of the firmament, unrivaled and unopposed.

Voridis A'Heliophos was just the most immediate threat in the cosmos. There was still the mystery of his heritage, his mother, and her enemies. The Tsarun Clan, and who knows what else lurked on the horizon. There was even the threat of the System itself wishing his sister harm, and the time bombs it had placed in his head.

Only one thing was certain; he was still too weak to take charge of his fate.

"I guess I'll keep training?" Zac said.

"Figures," Thea snorted with a small smile.

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The darkness continued, as it had for weeks. Was this death? An endless out-of-body experience where you were left with nothing but your thoughts? He had read about Purgatory in the holy scriptures on Earth, was it actually real? Perhaps it was, but it wasn't like he would remember it anyway. A pulse would sooner or later come and scatter his thoughts.

Speaking of, here it comes.

A tremendous shudder startled Ogras awake, and he found himself lying face-first in the dirt. Blank confusion assaulted his mind as he tasted the earthy soil in his mouth. But his mind was soon kickstarted as his memories came back to him. At least it looked like he was alive, unless this was the next part of the afterlife. But it didn't look like it. He had made it. Somehow.

"Shit, what was I thinking," Ogras muttered as he got up to a sitting position.

What could possess him to do something so stupid as to sacrifice his life for someone else? It went against every lesson on how to in this ruthless world that he had imprinted into his bones. To make it look like you risked your life was one thing, but you needed assurances that you wouldn't actually end up croaking when pretending to be the hero.

Yet it was almost as though his body moved by instinct as he flashed forward to throw that lass out of harm's way. That wasn't a calculated risk at all. In fact, he had already realized that he probably wouldn't be able to teleport back. That treasure was messing space to an extremely high degree, and there was no way he'd be able to enter the grey world in such close proximity to that thing.

Those two siblings were rubbing off on him in all the wrong ways.

He had accepted death then and there, yet he was that he was alive for some reason. It didn't make any sense. Ogras got up on his feet and gazed at the surroundings with some confusion. Where were the others? And why was he back out in the forest?

"Ah! Where is the bad Insect-Man?! Where is the big room?!" an overly loud voice exclaimed from a hundred meters away.

"What the hell," Ogras muttered and swooped over to the oversized human who looked around with a dumb stare. "You're here as well?"

"Ah, horny guy, it's you!" Billy said with some disdain. "Why did you carry Billy out here?"

"I didn't carry you anywhere," Ogras snorted. "You got yourself knocked out. I don't know why the hell we are out here."

"Ah, Billy remembers. That Insect-man was really strong. And a werewolf, just like the movies," Billy sighed before his eyes turned as wide as saucers. "Ah! Insect-man stole the building!"

"How would that even..." Ogras snorted in disdain, but his words were caught in his throat when he realized that the dumb brute was absolutely right.

They hadn't been transferred to some random spot in this hidden realm. They were just a few hundred meters away from where the enormous isolation dome should have stood. There was a hole thousands of meters deep where it once stood, but vibrant grass had already sprouted in the pit, growing with a speed visible even to the naked eyes.

There was no chance to get a grip on what was going on before another enormous tremor shook the whole world. The sky turned chaotic the next moment. One moment it was the aquamarine blue of before, the next moment there was only darkness. Then the darkness turned into a star-studded night sky.

Ogras and Billy looked up at the continuously transforming sky. It was like the owner of the realm couldn't decide how the sky should look, and tried on a series of different environments. A huge meteor suddenly appeared on the horizon, and it was like it was teleported as it suddenly hit land.

"Oh crap," Ogras said as he looked at the enormous plume of soil and dust that rose high into the sky.

However, the fear of seeing a meteor slam into the ground was nothing compared to the fear that followed it. The fear of realization. Ogras eyes immediately shot toward his hand, and despair immediately set in when he saw that the rune was gone. "Oh Crap."

"Ah?" Billy said with confusion, finally looking away from the still-transforming sky.

"I think we're stuck here, you and I," Ogras sighed, and he clarified what he was talking about when he saw the blank look on Billy's face. "The seals are gone. We will not be able to get back to Earth."

"Like castaways?" Billy frowned before he nodded.

Ogras looked on with confusion as Billy walked over to a young tree and ripped it straight out of the ground.

"Mama read Billy a book about being a castaway. First, you get a spear. Then coconuts. Have you seen any coconuts, horny man?" Billy asked.

"Coconuts? What? And why would you need that shitty spear? Don't you have that big club of yours?" Ogras said with exasperation.

"Ah!" Billy exclaimed again, his eyes lighting up. "Billy has lots of meat too. Billy is really smart after all."

"What would you even hunt with that weak spear of yours?" Ogras snorted as he took out a flagon of liquor. "There aren't even any life forms in this place. Well, at least there is plenty of Cosmic Energy and Origin Dao. Cultivating here will be extremely efficient."

He wasn't really thirsty, but this seemed like an excellent time to get drunk. He didn't have the slightest clue of how to get out from the hidden realm of a Dimensional Seed. Even worse, it looked like the seed was traveling between dimensions judging by the sky. Who knew if he would even still be inside the Zecia sector by the time he figured a way out of here.

A clattering shriek suddenly broke the silence, and its piercing tone made Ogras' hair stand on end. What the hell was that? It came from the direction of the meteor. Ogras suddenly thought of a terrifying possibility. That weird stone, was it really a meteor?

Or was it a Hive?

"Ah stupid horny man, you jinxed it," Billy muttered as he gave Ogras a scathing look.

"Of course," Ogras sighed and closed his eyes before taking a long, long swig.

This is what you get when you risk your life.

## **Chapter 660: Anniversary**

Zac took a deep breath as he opened his eyes, and he was greeted by the first rays of the suns piercing through the foliage of the poplar growing in his courtyard. This bout of meditation had lasted over three days, but to say that he had made any real gains would be a lie. He had been unable to properly calm his mind and enter a proper state.

Because today marked the third anniversary of the events in the Mystic Realm.

The scene of Ogras disappearing into the Dimensional Seed and the cataclysmic battle that followed was still fresh in his mind. His and Billy's life and death were still up in the air. Kenzie was still adamant about them surviving, but Zac couldn't help but lose hope as the years passed. They simply hadn't been able to find any information to support that theory.

"Still thinking about it?" a worried voice said as Thea stepped out of their bedroom.

"It's hard not knowing," Zac sighed as he got up to his feet and walked over and kissed her.

"Your sister still hasn't given up, you know. It feels like she is planning something big," Thea said as she gripped his hand in his.

"I know," Zac said as he felt a headache coming on just at the mention of Kenzie.

Ogras essentially sacrificed his life to save Kenzie, and Kenzie hadn't given up on him even after three full years. Part of him believed it was because of the life-saving favor, but another part believed the two had to have been an item in secret. Kenzie was always evasive on the subject, and he guessed that it didn't really matter. But the resources she had put into finding and saving the demon were, in a word, terrifying.

Then again, he wasn't one to talk considering how he acted with Alea back then, and it was her money. It wasn't like he was trying to find them either, but he wouldn't even know where to begin to look. He hadn't even managed to gather any intelligence on Dimensional Seeds, and it might not even be something that had appeared in Zecia before.

Still, Zac could only table the matter for now as the two walked through his private forest to a secluded pergola overlooking the ocean. It was far from the shipyard and the public sector, a small section of paradise just for the two of them. They sat down, content to simply watch the suns' morning rays dance over the waves.

Dating as a cultivator came with its own set of challenges, especially when both partners were cultivation maniacs. The two had lived together for almost two years by now, but this was actually the first time they spent together in almost a week.

As the two progressed on the path of cultivation they had found that every bout of meditation took longer and longer, especially now that the Origin Dao of Earth was completely exhausted. Zac had been in a meditative trance for almost three days trying to ponder on how to further his fusion between Dao and combat, but his progress was laughable.

Thea had been off training her swordplay while simultaneously thinning out an aggressive beast horde before that. Zac often undertook similar outings as well to test his theories when he wasn't busy working on his soul or understanding of fractals. Of course, this week-long separation was nothing compared to the seven months Thea spent in the Base Town and Tower of Eternity.

So, coming together to this secluded spot had become sort of a tradition for them, a way to get away from it all and spend some time on each other. There was no talk of cultivation or the endless duties that kept them busy the few hours they didn't cultivate. Thea took out a breakfast set she had prepared, and the two spent the next thirty minutes just relaxing.

"Oh, I happened to track down that disciple of yours while you were cultivating," Thea suddenly said.

"What is she up to now?" Zac sighed.

"She's a highway bandit in the forests close to the Dead Zone," Thea snorted. "She's scrounged up a bunch of teenagers from somewhere and they are robbing the adventuring groups that passes through on the way to the relay stations. I found out because she robbed one of my agents who recognized her."

"I'll send someone to bring her back," Zac exhaled.

"You know, Emily is acting out because she feels cramped up on this island. Why not let her walk her own path? Neither you or I got where we are now by staying in the Academy," Thea said. "She's a young woman now."

"That doesn't mean the Academy's not effective," Zac said. "I made enough mistakes for a lifetime getting to where I am now, and if not for my luck I would be dead a hundred times over. Only one out of a million might make it out alive when walking a path of constant bloodshed."

"I guess you'll have to find some middle-ground then or she'll keep running off. Sooner or later, she'll get her hands on a Teleportation Token, and then she won't be in your backyard any longer," Thea said.

"I need to practice with Aigale a bit, wish Kenzie good luck from me, will you?"

"I will," Zac nodded and kissed her goodbye before she disappeared with her movement skill.

Zac himself stayed behind to rest for a while longer.

Things had proceeded pretty much as expected after the return from the Mystic Realm. The auction was a huge success that netted him almost 40 billion Nexus Coins, which was followed by him almost effortlessly completing the Second Step of Sovereignty. He had been pitted against a hundred other presumptive Sovereigns of the Zecia sector in a situation somewhat similar to the Battle of Fates in the Tower of Eternity. But this time there was no Iz Tayn to strike terror in his heart.

This time he was the terror.

After he passed as the clear first-spot-holder, he was given a simple follow-up quest. He had proven that he had what it took to become a leader, afterward he just needed to hold onto that power. Of course, with Thea being his girlfriend and the remains of the New World Government integrated into Port Atwood, there was not much opposition. Most of the Ishiate didn't care one way or another. In fact, it turned out that Starlight had actually left Earth already thanks to some sort of opportunity he had gained.



The Zhix were solidly in his camp as well, and that alone was enough to make others think twice before making their move. The only potential threat was the natives of the fallen Mystic Realm, but Zac had already made his arrangements for them. The Gemlings were now part of Port Atwood and mostly stayed in his Underwater Town, crafting and looking for treasures on the seabed.

He hadn't expected those stone turtles to actually be amphibian in nature, but it turned out they preferred to either live close to the shores on his islands. Many of their crafting techniques were even water-based, though some had swapped over to follow the same path as Brazla.

The survivors of the True Sky Faction were in a similar situation as Clan Volor. The leaders had mostly signed the same sort of contracts as external elders did and stayed on with Port Atwood, with a few purchasing Teleportation Tokens from him to leave Earth and stake out a path on their own. Most of those who chose to remain, including Hekruv Vira, took up positions at the Atwood Academy, splitting their time between cultivation and research.

The Cartava Clan had been eradicated by the Lunar Tribe, and the werewolves were now a weak isolated faction under strict observation, forming just a small village with less than a thousand households. They lived up in the desolate North now, far from any other civilization. Ogras would no doubt have wanted Zac to take them all out, but Zac simply didn't have the stomach for it. There had been enough bloodshed in those last frantic days of the Mystic Realm.

Besides, Zac felt he owed a debt of gratitude to their leader. Things would probably have turned out a lot differently if he hadn't shown up at the eleventh hour in the battle against Adcarkas. To look after his tribe in return was the least he could do, especially considering their top elites were all killed. Of course, this courtesy only remained as long as the Lunar Tribe didn't do something stupid.

So, things were stable on Earth for the moment, but that wasn't to say that there hadn't been any attempts to stop his power grab over the following years. But every coup had been utterly crushed, often without Zac even needing to lift his finger. He had mostly left things to the Valkyries or the Zhix while he kept to himself as he worked on his foundation. One exception took place half a year ago though when a man called Mark Kaufman appeared out of nowhere.

He quickly gained a following as he proudly displayed his level, a whooping level 106, in the middle of the square of New Washington while simultaneously challenging Zac for the position of the leader of Earth. This guy had never been on the ladder while it still existed, and he wasn't listed on the Marshall Clan's booklet called Earth's Champions. His background was a complete mystery.

Of course, this Mark guy had obviously never heard of the term haste makes waste. Zac learned of the challenge and appeared ready for battle, but Mark Kaufman wasn't even able to withstand Zac's Dao Field. The pressure alone crushed his bones as he was forced to the ground. He was still in recovery from what Zac heard.

It quickly became clear that this guy was as lowly as cultivators came, and he was actually an E-Grade Common Cultivator, someone who had given up on future progression. He had almost no titles and no accomplishments to speak of, barely meeting the minimum requirements for evolution thanks to an herb he had chanced upon.

The way he had gained so many levels was directly linked to this; with such a shitty foundation he barely required any energy to level up. If Zac had such low requirements, he would probably have been level 150 by now, rather than still sitting at level 101.

In fact, Mark wasn't the only one who had passed Zac in level by now. The Earth's Champions booklet listed over two hundred humans having passed level 100 by now. Of course, they had only surpassed him on the level ladder. He still held an undisputed first position on the power ladder that the Marshall Clan also put together.

Zac briefly thought back to the System-run ladders of old, and he couldn't help but applaud Alyn's prescience. She had told him that less than half of the elites would be remembered in a few years, and this was exactly the case. The names on the Marshall Clan's level lists were almost all new names, with the old ladder geniuses occupying less than a quarter of the top.

Most of the 'old guard' were still stuck in the F-Grade, and only a few of them voluntarily so according to what he had heard. Earth being flooded with Origin Dao essentially supercharged early cultivation, and there really was not much reason to hanker on at F-Grade for more than a year or two on a recently integrated planet. They were given the gift of huge momentum, and it would be foolish not to make the most of it.

But only now did the people of Earth realize what an opportunity had passed them by during the early stages of the Integration. The training wheels were off now.

The Origin Dao was gone, and the opportunities to rack up massive achievements were sparse with no remaining Incursions, making it extraordinarily hard for those who had picked higher-rarity Classes to advance. Not everyone could be like Thea, returning victoriously from the Tower of Eternity and gaining an E-Grade Rare Class in one go.

Frictions were already starting to appear between forces, where desperate cultivators saw war as the only opportunity for them to break through their bottleneck. Cultivation was normally not this rushed, but the situation on a fresh planet was a bit unique. There were no elders to stabilize the situation, so those who progressed the fastest were also those who got to enjoy the best resources, no matter how shaky their foundations were.

Of course, the people of Port Atwood were mostly insulated from that hectic grab for levels and resources, with the Academy staunchly maintaining a more prudent curriculum. Zac himself was the same, with him having gained just over 10 levels over the past three years, a sharp decline compared to his earlier speed.

Part of him was a bit worried about losing momentum, but he didn't have much of a choice at the moment. He had chosen to walk an extremely perilous path, a path containing three top-tier concepts and fusing them into one system. He had been muddling along until now, but it was high time for him to shore up his foundations.

Outwardly it might have been seen as though he had stopped working after securing a century-long breather for Earth, but the truth was anything but. He had spent a herculean effort on his F-Grade skills, all of which had now reached Peak Mastery. This was normally something that was done before even evolving, so Zac had been lagging behind on that department.

Unfortunately, him shoring up his lacking foundation wasn't the only thing that kept his level suppressed. There were far more troublesome issues that caused him headaches. First of all, there was the ever-present issue of his Draugr Race constitution. Three years had passed but his improvements were simply pathetic.

The [Bone Forging Dust] was no longer effective on his body, which honestly was a bit of a relief. Calrin had managed to find a few minor treasures that worked on him as well, but he was still a long way from reaching D-Grade, especially since his undead side seemed to require far more resources to take that step.

Added together with his other gains he couldn't help but worry about hit his attribute cap, and the thought alone made Zac nervously open his Status Screen.

Name

Zachary Atwood

Level

101

Class

[E-Epic] Edge of Arcadia

Race

[D] Human - Void Emperor (Corrupted)

Alignment

[Earth] Port Atwood - Planetary Lord

Titles

Born for Carnage, Ultimate Reaper, Luck of the Draw, Giantsbane, Disciple of David, Overpowered, Slayer of Leviathans, Adventurer, Demon Slayer I, Full of Class, Rarified Being, Trailblazer, Child of Dao, The Big 500, Planetary Aegis, One Against Many, Butcher, Progenitor Noblesse, Duplicity Core, Apex Hunter, Heaven's Chosen, Scion of Dao, Omnidextrous, Eastern Trigram Hunt - 1st, Tyrannic Force, Achievement Hunter, The First Step, Promising Specialist, Tower of Eternity - 8th Floor, Heaven's Triumvirate, Fated, Peak Power, Sovereign-Select, Frontrunner, Apex Progenitor, Pathstrider

Limited Titles

Tower of Eternity Sector All-Star - 14th, Weight of Sin

Dao

Fragment of the Axe - High, Fragment of the Coffin - High, Fragment of the Bodhi - High

Core

[E] Duplicity

Strength

4032 [Increase: 93%. Efficiency: 228%]

Dexterity

1967 [Increase: 67%. Efficiency: 187%]

Endurance

3872 [Increase: 103%. Efficiency: 228%]

Vitality

3076 [Increase: 93%. Efficiency: 228%]

Intelligence

949 [Increase: 67%. Efficiency: 187%]

Wisdom

1803 [Increase: 72%. Efficiency: 187%]

Luck

397 [Increase: 91%. Efficiency: 197%]

Free Points

0

Nexus Coins

[E] 107 298

His other two Daos had caught up to his Fragment of the Axe by now, but he didn't feel like any of his Daos were close to taking reaching peak mastery. Inspiration was found in the heat of battle, which was doubly true for his Fragment of the Axe, and he hadn't been forced to push himself since the cataclysmic battles in the Mystic Realm.

But there was one more reason, something Zac hadn't realized until now. It really seemed his progress was a lot worse compared to even normally talented people now that the Origin Dao was gone. It was like his Dao Progress was extremely quick as long as it had some fuel to run on, be it Origin Dao or treasures, but the moment there was no fuel supplied, progress simply stopped.

Others could at least make some progress through meditation, but Zac didn't feel like he was doing that at all. Perhaps he was making some inroads, but it wouldn't be realized until he got his hands on an E-grade Dao Treasure. There was no doubt about it in Zac's mind; this, too, was related to his Void Emperor-bloodline. Zac believed he wouldn't have many bottlenecks, but he would need to find treasures or treasure lands to push his progress forward.

Of course, his Daos having stagnated a bit was for the best with his current situation.

His attributes had increased by almost 50% thanks to his levels and improved Daos over the past years. In a way, it was almost a relief that his peak mastery [Forester's Constitution] couldn't keep up with his ballooning attribute pool any longer, and the actual boosts to Endurance and Vitality it provided were far below the advertised 15%.

Just the thought of gaining another level in his current situation filled him with worry. He had reached Middle E-Grade by now, and the boosts had doubled. What if he hit the attribute cap? Of course, that wasn't the only reason why breaking open a node filled him with trepidation.

The dangers of grinding had taken a sharp and drastic turn the moment he hit Middle E-grade.