

## The Fall 662

### Chapter 662: Deviant

The Thayer Consortium had gained over two hundred billion Nexus from selling Kenzie's Array Breakers over the past three years. That wasn't much compared to established mercantile unions, but it was still a shocking amount considering how small a percentage Calrin charged for Kenzie's business. Furthermore, the actual sale of Array Breakers was the smaller Kenzie's two income sources by all accounts. Extortion was far more profitable.

It did end up with the Thayer Consortium forming a few dozen life-death grudges, since while Kenzie could remain anonymous, it all ultimately happened through Calrin's license. But the greedy Sky Gnome figured that it didn't matter since he already had the Tsarun Clan looking for him. What was a few more?

Zac himself wasn't exactly sure of his sister's fortune by this point, but she had mentioned that the total cost for Jeeves' upgrades had long surpassed 5 D-Grade Nexus Coins, which was the equivalent of over 5 Trillion Nexus Coins. That was far beyond even the exorbitant cost of [Love's Bond].

Many of the materials had required him to send some of his followers off-world as well, which was only made possible after becoming a Planetary Lord. The increased status allowed him to bring one person with him either when leaving or returning to Earth, which he could exploit by simply opening the portal and not go through himself.

Sometimes it was to attend large-scale auctions or trade fairs, other times to pick up consigned items through intermediaries. Zac would normally have wanted to go out and explore along with his subordinates, but he usually handed the tasks over to his followers in the end. First of all, he was too busy to wait for weeks or months for a particular item to appear at an auction, but the biggest reason was that his identity was too complicated at the moment.

That wasn't to say he hadn't left Earth over the past three years.

Going out as himself was impossible, but he did have the disguise skill [Million Faces] which provided an aura-altering effect. Together with Greatest's privacy bangle, he had a pretty decent disguise. He still only left when absolutely necessary though, and only to places he could confirm didn't house any C-Grade Monarchs.

Zac obviously didn't think himself capable of dealing with proper D-Grade Hegemons in case it came to blows, especially not after witnessing the Great Redeemer duking it out with the Collector and the Administrator. It was rather that people below the C-Grade were quite unlikely to discover his disguise. That allowed him to set out, complete his task, and return before he created any waves.

After all, Zac's reputation had grown to almost mythical proportions over the past three years. His deeds had been spread far and wide, and even Calrin had been able to easily purchase information packets containing everything he had done in the Base Town.

The only force that had openly condemned him and put out an enormous bounty was unsurprisingly the Tsarun Clan. No matter if it was to retain their dignity or if they believed that an irreconcilable grudge had already formed, they had openly stated their desire to have him killed. Their real goal was probably to find out the source of his power though, considering how power-hungry they were.

Zac personally preferred such an open stance compared to the daggers hidden in the dark. If there was one force that was openly going after him, then there were no doubt dozens doing it without publishing it far and wide. Especially considering that not a single faction had stepped out to protect him, not even the Peak Family. Perhaps that was because he still only represented potential, but Zac also feared that it might have something to do with the title he had been given in his absence.

The Deviant Asura.

A surge of annoyance bubbled up when he thought of the shitty nickname people used to talk about him behind his back. A beating of galactic proportions would be dished out if he ever got his hands on Galau. His actions during the panty raid had spread far and wide, along with dozens of fake stories that had made his reputation in the Zecia sector far worse than it ever was on Earth.

There was even a rumor going about that he was collecting young maidens for his harem. He had asked Ibtep about the situation the moment they returned from the Zethaya branch, but they had said that everything was under control. The Zhix Liaison had clearly not been able to dig out the truth from the Zethaya Clan even after staying with them for over a month.

Even crazier, there were actually millions of girls willing to take him up on the offer. Zac had to admit the thought was pretty exhilarating to have become such an eligible partner, but it had resulted in some trouble on the home front. For example, Thea had returned from the Tower of Eternity with the temper of a volcano about to erupt after having listened to the rumors for over half a year.

The Deviant title thankfully didn't only refer to his supposed penchant for young girls and wearing their undergarments, but also the ruthless way he fought. A video of him holding the ripped-off head of Rasuliel Tsarun in the rubble of the Zethaya Pill House was attached to every information missive, and his corpse tree still stood tall in the center of the Base Town for some reason.

His and his people's outings had at least come with some good news; he had not only snatched up the second material for Karunthel's quest, but also a third. He had lucked out and gotten his hands on a [Daemonic Manastone] himself during one of his rare outings. It was while looking for Infernal Crystals, an exceedingly rare attuned crystal mainly utilized by some summoner classes.

The manastone was similar to a Beast Core, belonging to a creature summoned from some sort of abyssal plane. It had a very unique ability that made it different from normal Beast Cores though; to continuously draw power from that unknown dimension. Zac guessed that Karunthel wanted that thing to see if it could be turned into a power source that didn't need to be replaced all the time like Nexus Crystals.

One manastone wouldn't even be able to power an E-Grade vessel even if the Creators managed to transform the alien energies it emitted, but what if you integrated thousands of them into a Cosmic Vessel? It sounded like a pretty good idea to Zac, provided you could stomach the cost.

The other item he had gathered was unsurprisingly the [Urgarat Flakes]. Zac had discovered that one of the teleportation tokens in his possession led to a faction in the same area as a planet where you could harvest the natural run-off material. He had sent one of his people to stay in the town for five months, and the flakes eventually appeared in an auction.

That left only one material to upgrade the shipyard; the [Ferric Worldeater], and Zac already knew where to find it. The only reason he hadn't set out to visit Leyara's Void Monastery yet was that he was hesitant whether he was ready to deal with that place. He would probably have to go as himself if he wanted a shot at reaching the Void Star, the mysterious anomaly that was at the heart of the Void Gate-faction.

He had researched all kinds of methods to hide his unique points from even C-grade Monarchs, but he still wasn't confident in the results. It was a shame too, considering that the Void Gate not only was the only confirmed source of the weird space beasts, but also a place that might hold more answers about his bloodline. If there was any place in the Zecia Sector where he might find a Bloodline Method that actually suited him, then it would be over there.

But the Void Priestess was there, and Zac was unwilling to put himself in such a helpless situation.

The same unfortunately went for any high-grade world, no matter if you were talking about the Allbright Empire, the Twilight Harbor, or even the chaotic space outside the Red Zone of the Allbright Empire. All of them potentially housed Monarchs that might be able to expose him just with a single glance. Some might not care, but it just took one of them to garner some interest for him to get caught and dissected like a lab animal.

He wasn't all that worried about the remnants being found out in the Zecia sector. Their cage was something set up by the System itself and Be'Zi, who Zac was pretty much certain was a B-Grade Cultivator. It was his mutated Specialty Core that was the problem. It had only taken Greatest a glance to somewhat figure out what it would do, and the same was true for Yrial.

There were all kinds of powerful Specialty Cores, but he had never heard of something so overpowered as to give a whole second class. Even Monarchs would probably be interested in that. Kenzie was working on some sort of array that might help disguise it and make it look like a normal Duplicity Core, but progress was slow even with the help of her vast calculating power. Perhaps the imminent evolution of Jeeves would be the change that would lead to a breakthrough.

Zac spent the rest of the day the same way as usual, cultivating his soul for a few hours before he visited Abby to go over the general state of Earth. Nothing much was new though. The situation on Earth was becoming increasingly stable as time passed. The population of Earth had even started growing again, albeit barely.

There was the issue of the increasing number of monster tides plaguing the towns. There was a huge number of beasts that had reached E-grade by this point, and many of them looked to expand their territories. It was still a common occurrence for towns to be overrun or badly hurt.

It wasn't that Zac didn't want to help, and there were quite a few elites in Port Atwood who would be more than willing to jump from town to town and clear out monsters. The System unfortunately didn't want that to happen. It often disabled the teleporters when the beasts came running, creating trials for the township. If they succeeded, someone would probably make some sort of breakthrough in the town. If they failed and were eaten, the System would save on resources.

Port Atwood was working on preventative measures, for example keeping track of areas that held the potential to turn into monster tides. The more successful forces were also dealing with the issue

themselves. The easiest way to prevent a monster tide was to regularly hunt beasts in the vicinity. It both provided wealth and power to your faction while preventing being overrun.

Zac left the government building an hour later, stepping out onto the tiled ground. A few modified cars flashed by, their engines powered by Nexus Crystals. But vehicles were still a rare sight as most people in Port Atwood chose to walk. There were very few low-leveled people in the town even after its population had exploded over the past years, and it didn't really save time to take a car for the average cultivator.

His eyes turned to the sprawling city around him, and he still couldn't really believe that it was all under his control. Towering skyscrapers reached toward the clouds, each of them an architectural marvel that would shock the world before the integration. Things were different nowadays, with resources being far more plentiful.

Designs that would previously be unsafe or prohibitively expensive were suddenly made possible with the help of spiritual materials and inscriptions. Some of the skyscrapers were even made from wood even though they reached over five hundred meters into the sky.

The sprawling towers had taken all kinds of inspiration. From the demonic fusion of nature and buildings to the Steampunk Brass of the Ishiate Tinkerers. A few even looked like actual mountains or stalagmites, which were mainly used by the molemen of the Underworld. There was one common thread though; all the buildings held large gardens and terraces on their roofs, and even along their walls.

Pollution wasn't really a problem any longer thanks to the city largely running on Cosmic Energy instead of electricity, but Zac didn't want to see his paradisaical island being turned into a concrete jungle either. The roads were wide and lined with trees, and the buildings were all surrounded by parks or gardens, even the high-rise buildings. It gave the town a far roomier feeling compared to the old cities of Earth.

Something like this would normally be impossible considering the value of land in the capital of a world, but Zac still retained the ownership of the whole island apart from Azh'Rodum. Most of the buildings were his as well, though some were built by others.

For example, Joanna owned a large block of student housing close to the Academy, using it as an additional income to supplement her cultivation. Many of the elites and old guard did the same. Sap Trang, who almost perennially lived out on the dangerous waters with his Kraken, had started working on setting up a whole maritime conglomerate, providing everything from protection to exploring the depths of the sea.

Ilvere owned all kinds of entertainment establishments in Azh'Rodum, mainly targeted at the cultivators who worked the crystal mines. There were tens of thousands of other smaller businesses keeping the economy of Port Atwood going, but the main focus of the inhabitants was ultimately cultivation.

Most people lived in Port Atwood for the extremely dense Cosmic Energy. Zac didn't know whether it was a reward from the System or if he was just lucky, but the Nexus Vein beneath the island had kept growing in power over the past years. The density of energy was simply unmatched, especially after Zac had added some massive gathering arrays covering the whole town.

A lot of people would rather live in a small apartment in Port Atwood than build a sprawling mansion somewhere else on Earth. However, only a few ever got the opportunity, as Zac kept the population numbers of his main island under strict control. If he let the numbers balloon the energy density would grow too sparse, which would affect the cultivation of the elites of his faction.

Zac soon returned to his compound. Of course, it was more accurate to call it a fortress thanks to his increased Town Shop access as a World Leader, and his sister's adjustments. Anyone beneath the D-Grade could only dream of entering his private forest, and even a D-Grade hegemon would need to expend quite a bit of effort and time, enough time for Zac to return with the help of his teleportation bracelet.

He didn't head for his own courtyard as he knew that Thea would be off training. Instead, he walked over to the series of buildings his sister used for her tinkering. As expected, he found Kenzie going over a series of schematics that made Zac dizzy just from looking at them.

"Don't you look relaxed," Zac smiled as he sat down next to her. "How do you feel?"

"I feel fine," Kenzie smiled. "Don't worry. I've run the simulations for this so many times by now. And I finally received the last treasures yesterday. It's finally time to take the next step. Today, Jeeves and I will enter the E-grade."