

## The Fall 738

### Chapter 738: King of the Mountain

Various incipient plans for the near future were thrown out the window as the whole mountain once more shook under the weight of the Beast King's wrath. There was no way Zac could stay in the area and work on his cultivation. Even if he wasn't discovered, he wasn't certain the mountain would survive the rampage of the enormous snake much longer.

Zac retrieved his chains and made a final cursory scan of the area before he started to move. As expected, everything of value had already been absorbed through his bloodline evolution, not even leaving husks behind. He figured that it wasn't a complete loss though. All those treasures had to contribute to something when they were swallowed by the void, even if he wasn't exactly sure that that was just yet.

Another roar outside made the waters churn even within the mountain, and Zac looked around for a way to get out of the mountain. He doubted that he gave off any aura from the treasures that had disappeared. But he also doubted that an enraged Beast King, or perhaps even Beast Emperor, would care too much about such minor details. It would simply attack anything that was suspect.

As for fighting the snake, there was simply no way.

The immensity of the beast was just beyond what he could handle, no matter if you talked level or physical size. His stockpiled energy from the remnants was mostly used up after fighting Uona, but even if they weren't – so what? A full-powered Annihilation Sphere would not even be enough to breach the gargantuan scales the snake was covered in.

A Mark of Creation might create some sort of tumor-like growth, but it was no way one mark was enough to take out something that size. Escape was the only option, preferably all the way to the potential wall he had gleaned in the distance. He would have to pray that his newfound ability would be enough to take him across the vast chasm without getting ripped to shreds.

First thing's first; he needed to get away from the central mountain since it was just a matter of time before the snake made its way here. After all, Zac had a strong suspicion that it was no longer hidden like before now that he had absorbed all those odd flowers. The snake would definitely investigate if sooner rather than later.

The cave he had been teleported into before had been sealed off from the outside, but his evolution had caused a crack and let the water inside, providing Zac with a convenient route out of this place. It wasn't a proper pathway though, and Zac had no choice but to activate [Abyssal Phase] when the crack turned much too thin to traverse.

Soon enough Zac appeared at the surface of the peak, and he once more reverted into his tangible form as he restrained his aura as much as he could. His body was already starting to fill up with Twilight Energy after having used his intangible form, and he was forced to immediately reactivate his bloodline talent again.

The storm of Twilight Energy that burrowed into his body was instantly rebuffed, giving him a reprieve from the onslaught. Zac sighed as he carefully peered out from the mouth of the crack, and he was

thankfully met only with raging currents and distant peaks. No Midgard snake was slithering about outside, though the palpable air of bloodlust still suffused the whole area.

Another roar echoed out from the distance, and Zac guessed that the snake was still laying waste to the outer sector of the cluster of peaks. He was about to set out, but his danger sense suddenly woke up and he immediately shrunk back into the crevasse with wide eyes. It wasn't the snake that suddenly appeared, but he felt a powerful sense spread across the whole area before continuing toward the other peaks.

The snake was on the hunt for real.

It felt like his heart threatening to jump out of his mouth, but he almost cried in relief when felt another crash reverberate through the area. The snake had attacked another peak rather than coming for him. It looked like his Void Zone had managed to obfuscate his presence to at least avoid a cursory scan.

Zac knew this was his chance, and he grit his teeth as he pushed out from the mountain. Void Zone helped with the Twilight Energy, but they didn't really affect the currents just like Zac had feared. They immediately started dragging him further into the depths while he traversed the chasm between the peaks, and shallow gashes appeared one after another on his body because of the waters.

But it was far preferable to becoming snake food.

Zac hadn't had time to completely restore his reserves of Void Energy after his experiments, but he sensed it would be enough to keep his new talent active for half an hour at least. He needed to use that time to the fullest to get away from this place while the snake was occupied elsewhere.

He couldn't follow his old regimen of climbing for a few minutes before resting for an hour. The whole mountain range would be leveled before he got out of harm's way that way. Soon enough Zac had crossed the chasm to the next mountain, using as little energy as he possibly could. Part of him believed that the immense density of Twilight Energy around him should be enough to obfuscate a small burst of energy coming from his skills, but he wouldn't take any chances with that monstrosity lurking somewhere close by.

Zac didn't stop and rest like he usually would, and instead popped a healing pill as he started to climb around the peak so that he could swim toward the next one. He was pretty familiar with the area after having looked for treasure for a few weeks, and he knew there were five mountains he would have to cross before reaching the peak closest to the distant mountain.

A roar echoed out again, and Zac was dismayed at how much closer it was this time. Getting subjected to the cry at closer proximity felt like getting hit by a sledgehammer, and Zac could only look on as the waters around him were tainted with ichor squeezed out from his wounds. Still, he didn't as much as grunt or let his aura fluctuate in fear that he would be discovered.

Out of nowhere, a gargantuan shape flashed by, its speed seemingly impossible considering its size. It was like Zac's whole vision had been replaced by impossibly large scales out of nowhere. Zac said a silent prayer as he prepared for the worst, but he was relieved to see the beast ramming straight into a neighboring mountain, causing cracks thousands of meters long to spread across its slopes.

It looked like the Twilight Ocean buckled from the impact before it rushed out in every direction with terrifying force. Zac didn't even have a chance to erect any defenses before the wave crashed into him, almost knocking him clean out then and there. His chains had thankfully managed to keep him fastened to the mountain wall, and he grabbed on with desperation as huge chunks of rocks were ripped away around him.

Suddenly, a weaker screech echoed out as a hundred-meter-long fish with long trailing fins shot out from one of the cracks in the neighboring mountain, its aura clearly eclipsing the Beast King that Zac killed in the Greengrove Archipelago. From the looks of it, it had been in secluded cultivation deep inside the mountain, enjoying the dense Twilight Energy in the area until the snake came knocking.

However, it clearly wasn't preparing to fight the intruder over having its territory encroached. It pierced the torrential currents as it expended every effort to escape. The far larger beast wouldn't simply let up though, and its head snaked around with almost impossible speed, snatching the fish up in a ruthless bite.

There was no fight and no struggle, just a much larger predator gobbling up its helpless prey, which only reinforced Zac's decision to not fight the thing. Killing the Beast King did nothing to alleviate the snake's anger though, and it released another earthshattering roar after having swallowed the much smaller fish.

Zac was starting to accumulate wounds upon wounds even with Void Zone active, and he wasn't sure how much longer he could take even indirect damage from this beast. He felt incredibly small and helpless, just like when he witnessed the clash between the Hegemons inside the Mystic Realm. Black ichor freely leaked from his nose and ears as the large cracks all over the mountain worsened.

The ocean itself became muddied for a few seconds as innumerable shards of rock fell off the mountains and joined the currents. However, the debris was quickly cleared thanks to the unearthly speed of the waters, and the monstrous beast was once more exposed.

The snake released another snort before it started to slither away, completely crushing the currents that slammed against its scales with enough force to kill a normal Peak E-grade warrior. Zac's whole body shook from a mix of primal fear and adrenaline overload, but he staunchly held on as he kept utilizing his new bloodline talent to be able to withstand the Twilight Energy.

It really looked like the ability did help a bit against discovery. Of course, it was also possible that he was simply so small and insignificant that the snake didn't care about him, though he wouldn't rely on such a flaky theory to survive. He stayed completely still against the mountain wall as he watched the snake move further and further away until it was impossible to discern its head even with [Cosmic Gaze].

It was the first time that Zac had managed to spot the true appearance of the impossibly large creature. It had a long snout like an alligator rather than a traditional snake, and it had the teeth to match. Hundreds and hundreds of jagged fangs covered its enormous maw, each one large enough to be considered a mountain on its own. Eight pitch-black pairs of lifeless orbs sat on the two sides of its head, the smallest pair of eyes as large as barn doors.

Its appearance was terrifying enough, but Zac's thoughts were more focused on something curious. There was actually a large rune on the beast's forehead. It wasn't something that had naturally formed

on the beast's scale, but rather something that had been inscribed by the looks of it. More importantly, it was actually a rune that Zac actually recognized.

It was the insignia of the Twilight Lord.

He had a few theories about how something like that was possible, but now wasn't the time to worry about the details. Zac didn't dare wait too long, and he actually swam right under the snake's tail after shoving a stack of talismans into a crack in the rocks behind him. He once more took advantage of the cover against the currents that the enormous animal provided, and he reached the next mountain even before the Beast King had completely left the area.

It quickly became clear what the snake was doing as Zac kept moving further and further away from the heart of the mountain range. Every so often another one of the immense pulses spread out and covered the whole area, and a tremendous shockwave erupted within a minute. Zac estimated that it had exposed and disposed of over twenty Beast Kings over the last hour, one more powerful than the next.

Zac felt a sense of dread upon realizing that the area was nowhere near as desolate as he had initially thought while traveling back and forth in search of treasures. It was just that these beasts all hid within the depths of the mountains, perhaps in fear of the big guy that was now hunting them one by one.

Another pulse rippled through the waters, the force of the ability powerful enough to divert the currents themselves. Zac froze in place as he staunchly endured the feeling of his insides getting shifted by the energy wave. It soon passed, and Zac hurriedly squeezed into a nearby crevasse and cracked two Supreme Miasma Crystals as he took out the Void Beast organ.

Five minutes passed, at which point Zac stopped and activated Void Zone once more, and it was just in time as the gargantuan snake passed by just two mountains away in search of its next victim.

It took over almost two hours, and he had been forced to make four stops, but he finally reached his destination; the very edge of the mountain range. Less than half of the mountains in the area were still unscathed by this point, and Zac could only attribute the fact that he was still alive to dumb luck.

The snake hadn't attacked anything closer than that fish he saw killed earlier, which was the only reason he hadn't been turned to mush. Of course, if it came to that he could always jump into a current toward the depths of the Twilight Chasm, but that would only be replacing one certain death with another.

There were limits to everything, even his cheat-like methods, and Zac held no delusions that he would be able to freely travel as far down the Chasm as he wished without any ramifications. For now, the plan was still on, and Zac saw his target far in the distance. There was just the issue of the vast gulf of frantic currents in the way.

He knew it would be perilous to cross this distance even with Void Zone, but there wasn't much he could do about it. The snake was clearly growing more irate by the minute, no doubt because it had failed to recover a single one of the missing treasures. Zac wasn't some expert in hiding his presence, and he'd be discovered by one of the scans sooner or later as the beast tightened its net. After all, he was occasionally forced to turn off his talent to restore his reserves of Void Energy.

Time was of the essence, but Zac didn't immediately set out. Finally, the scanning pulse came, and Zac waited with bated breath until he heard the distant explosion accompanied by a whimpering cry of some unknown Beast King. This was it - he wouldn't get a better opportunity than this.

Zac immediately shot out taking the leap of faith into the unknown, his senses strained to the maximum to avoid the currents too powerful for him to deal with. It felt like he was in the middle of a hurricane, surrounded by rampaging gales. However, something suddenly changed behind him, prompting him to accidentally get viciously swiped by a large rock that was being dragged down toward the depths.

An outcropping in the neighboring mountain suddenly transformed into a humongous octopus that sped off, cutting through the waters in the same direction as Zac. Each one of its eight 100-meter-long tentacles frantically pushed the beast forward, creating a full-fledged storm in its attempt to escape.

Zac's brow's rose when he realized that the Beast King had been planning the exact same thing as he, both of them speeding away from the area the moment the Beast King was occupied on the other side of the mountain range. The octopus had no doubt spotted Zac considering their close proximity, but both minded their own business in their desperation to escape. Zac considered turning back for a moment, but he was already some ways into the waters. He had to keep going.

Things were going even better compared to when he used his Cosmic Vessels before, and Zac saw a glimpse of hope that his plan would actually work. Void Zone dealt with most of the twilight Energy, and he used [Love's Bond] in its shield form like a turtle shell to protect most of his body as he pushed himself forward with the help of his legs.

However, an infuriated roar and a sense of overwhelming doom soon dashed his hopes. He still couldn't see it, but he felt how a towering killing intent had locked onto the area, which meant it was just a matter of time before that terrifying maw would catch up. Zac swore as his abyssal eyes turned toward the Beast King swimming next to him, a flame of fear and fury burning in his chest.

This god damn octopus had blown his cover.