

## The Fall 787

### Chapter 787: Stronger

Zac could barely believe his eyes when he saw the small egg sail past him, barely visible among the endless pieces of rubble. But he was certain. He couldn't sense his Mark of Creation at all, but that was definitely the egg he had dropped off at the valley, or at least a copy of it.

A shudder by his chest from [Love's Bond] confirmed it. No matter whether it was the one he had transported to the heart of the Twilight Ocean or if it was another one, it was definitely something that Alea wanted to consume. Problem was, it had quite the momentum as it soared through the ether, flying away from both the core and from Zac.

Toward a spatial tear in the distance.

It might have been expelled along with the cultivators or knocked away during the battle for ascension. Zac had no way of telling why it had appeared here, but he unhesitantly changed course, pushing himself to the limit to catch up to the thing. Alea's situation had improved after infusing the coffin with Temporal Energy, but he wouldn't put his faith in Qi'Sar's advice.

The Realm Spirit was probably willing to say whatever it needed to get closer to Zac and have him put down his guard, no matter if its advice was true or not. After all, it only needed to fool him until he had activated that odd cage array around the infant Realm Spirits. For all Zac knew, infusing [Love's Bond] with the Temporal Crystals might just have slowed down everything inside the coffin, rather than just the chaotic energies.

[Love's Bond] might be breaking apart, just at a slower pace. But wasn't this thing perfect for Alea's situation? The small egg had been able to refine and purify the energies of the Twilight Ocean, turning them into something useful. Perhaps, it could help Alea do the same. At the very least, it was clearly something she desperately wanted.

After everything she had done for him, he couldn't back down now, especially when it was just a small detour. He pushed off from a broken store sign that floated next to him, quickly making his way toward the item. However, Zac felt the energy in his body go haywire as he heard an enraged voice roar from behind.

"Enough!"

It didn't sound like Alvod. Rather, it was filled with a familiar Dao that beat like the drums of war, of clashing steel and bloodied swords. It was the voice of someone who had made war their path, and it felt like a general's order that almost managed to stop Zac in his tracks. It was no doubt the Havarok leader, and Zac's felt a wave of dismay upon realizing that the Autarch's aura was rapidly rising. This wasn't actually his full power?

He didn't know the details, but according to Catheya, there were some issues that prevented Autarchs from freely roaming the "lower realms", the Sectors that didn't normally have the capabilities to nurture B-grade cultivators. Perhaps that was what had stopped him from simply unleashing a wave of destruction that ripped the Eveningtide Asura apart, but it looked like his patience had run dry.

Zac glanced back to see that a huge lance had appeared in the crowned giant's hand, surprisingly similar to the one Zac had seen in the vision from the Stele of Conflict. However, while the one that the mysterious general had formed out of a crushed moon was crudely formed and filled with the raw and unbridled power of conflict, this weapon instead relied on extremely high-grade runes to attain a similar might.

In either case, it was a terror of a weapon, radiating an aura that was almost a match to its owner. Space continuously cracked around it, and Zac felt himself pierced by just looking in its direction. It was possible that this was the first B-grade treasure he had seen, and it was trained at Alvod.

At the same time, Zac actually sensed the aura of the Heavens grow deeper, more profound. Not only did the swirling vortex in the sky expand a bit, but there was a secondary source of the feeling coming from within the giant's body. Then, an enormous rune appeared behind the giant's back.

Looking at it felt like looking at the shimmering lights in the sky. It wasn't a snippet of a path or intent taken form. It was pure Dao, imbued with the weight of the Heavens themselves. It was War, and Zac felt the Cosmic Energy in his surroundings bend to the will of the runes, reforming itself under a new world order.

The sky rumbled at the appearance of the brand, Zac saw how two nearby world disks crumbled, unable to withstand the pressure any longer. The two remaining Dao Pillars weren't faring much better, and they flickered precipitously like candles in the wind. The two stopped fighting with each other for a moment, and Alvod took out an ancient-looking cauldron.

He threw it out, and it emitted a multi-colored aura that stabilized the area around him. Zac barely discerned some ancient hymns as well, reminding him of the impression he got from staring into the golden light of [Rapturous Divide]. It was the song of the Arcadia, divine hymns holding the truths of paradise.

Zac forcibly kept his mind from drifting away, speeding toward the egg as he kept track of the events behind him. Alvod's Dao Pillar had stabilized after throwing out the cauldron, and it seemed like he wasn't planning on backing down even after the Autarch had unleashed an even greater part of his might.

The man from the Eternal Clan was clearly not ready to back down either. A thump echoed out as a red flash appeared from within the sanguine waters near Alvod, and Zac groaned as it felt like his blood was about to be pulled out from his body. Only by stopping his movement skill and activating [Void Zone] did he manage to keep his blood to himself.

Others weren't as lucky, and innumerable red streams shot toward the center of the realm. Millions of millions of bodies were instantaneously exsanguinated, and the blood turned into vast rivers. Zac didn't know why, but it almost felt like the blood wasn't being stolen, but that it rather returned to its origin, like rivers returning to the ocean.

The sanguine pillar stabilized as well, and Zac actually noticed that both the pillars had grown taller. Did the Havarok Imperial inadvertently help the two by unleashing his Dao? From the looks of it, his Dao had strengthened the connection between the heavens and this area, making ascension easier.

If that was the case, he was probably out of options but to unleash his true power. The Eveningtide Asura was a known monster, and an elite from the Eternal Clan had to be difficult even for an Autarch to deal with.

“Good!” Alvod laughed as an enormous rowboat appeared above his head, bringing a shocking tidal wave in its wake. “Let’s put it all on the line, for my path.”

“For eternity,” a dour voice echoed out from within the bloody ocean.

From within the bloody ocean, the red light flashed again. It lit up the whole Twilight Harbor, drenching even the Heavens in sanguine luster. The myriad streams of blood condensed around it, forming a massive sword. Zac was dismayed when he felt the might in that weapon. It was clearly controlled by a Divine Monarch, yet it was almost a match to the huge lance.

It was all thanks to that light, that terrifying red light that seemingly had the power to contend against the Heavens themselves.

No matter if it was the rowboat and the living ocean beneath, the lance rife with the momentum of war, or the rapier of the Eternal Clan, their might was just too much. Zac could barely withstand them now before they had even been launched. How would he possibly survive a clash between the three?

He desperately looked around in search of answers, and his eyes suddenly stopped on the egg. There was no other option. Zac propelled himself forward, no longer looking back at the three warriors fighting for supremacy. Space itself couldn’t withstand the might of their towering auras colliding.

The whole area buckled and was pushed outward, forming an advance shockwave as the three prepared to put it all on the line. Zac saw his surroundings twist and bend, but he ignored the ominous portents as he desperately jumped from one piece of debris after another to keep his movement skill going.

Each step with [Earthstrider] was pushed to the limits of what the skill could achieve, even if he had to literally step on the drained corpses of the fallen to make it happen. He was a blur that cut through the compacted layers of space. Finally, he reached his destination; the purifier egg. It was just at the edge of the enormous spatial tear which stretched in front of him like a wall of ultimate darkness, taking up his vision.

Behind, the blood-drenched auras kept increasing in intensity, and the stars in the area rapidly dimmed, unable to withstand this kind of output. Zac hurriedly grabbed the egg the moment he appeared next to it, but he didn’t stop or turn around from there. He simply kept going, disappearing in an instant as he jumped again.

Into the Void.

It was the only solution Zac could think of. The Void was dangerous and he couldn’t stay inside for long before succumbing, but was it really more dangerous than two Divine Monarchs duking it out with an Autarch? He wouldn’t bet his life on his Luck being enough to steer the errant bursts of energy from heading his way. It was better to hide between the folds of reality and then sneak back through a tear when the fighting was over.

Tearing pain assaulted his body, and it felt like he was being drained. However, the weird feeling abated drastically as he activated [Void Zone] again. It was a relief that his Bloodline actually managed to protect him in this dangerous no-man's-land, but he knew that he wasn't out of the woods just yet.

The spatial tear was open right behind him, exposing him to the events at the heart of the Harbor. The tear had been a wall of darkness on the other side, but he could still see the three powerhouses from within the Void. Desperately, Zac tried to move out of the way, and large bursts of Void Energy were exhausted in an effort to gain some traction in this weird dimension.

It felt like he was stuck in a waking nightmare as he tried to traverse the nothingness, where he barely moved in place. He had already come in contact with the odd properties of the Void in the research base, and he had only later learned that it mostly stemmed from the fact that the Void lacked the Dao of Space.

It made traversing the Void extremely confusing, considering something that appeared to be right in front of you could be thousands of meters away, and vice versa. There was no gravity, there was no direction. It wasn't a vacuum, it was nothingness. It was these odd features that made Teleportation Arrays possible, apparently, allowing you to move across the Multiverse for a fraction of the energy it should've cost.

Of course, that knowledge didn't help him right now, but he did remember something else. Zac's mind throbbed and his skin crackled as he deactivated [Void Zone] before emitting as powerful a Dao Feld as he could, squeezing what little energy he had left to impose his will on the surroundings. It worked, and he finally found himself moving. He shot one final look at Alvod Jondir as he moved out of the way from the spatial tear.

Even if he was a madman at worst and a ruthless powerhouse who sacrificed everything for the Dao at best, Zac couldn't help but feel some sort of connection with the man. Their origins were eerily alike, and they even walked similar paths of cultivation. Now, he was struggling all alone, desperately fighting off both an imperial elite and an Autarch to seize an opportunity to continue his cultivation.

Zac was beset by a wave of gloom as he looked at that solitary back. Was this what the pursuit of the peak looked like? Withstanding eons of loneliness, shedding everything that didn't help you on your path. All for what? For longevity, so that you could extend your dreary existence? To seize some sort of truth that would satiate your obsession?

What pushed Alvod Jondir to these lengths?

The small wooden boat above Alvod's head suddenly lit up, turning from corporeal to intangible as it melded with the crashing waves that had propped it up. Millions and millions of runes covered the golden waters as it split to strike both the vampire's rapier and the Havarok imperial simultaneously. The waves contained unstoppable momentum, the condensed force of his will.

The Autarch wasn't to be outdone, and the whole world dimmed as he swung his lance in return. Zac desperately wanted to see the result of the clash, but he ultimately chose life over discovery, pushing himself out of the way and losing the vantage.

There was no sound, and no warning as the whole Void lit up. Tens of thousands of scars appeared all around him as immense currents of furious energy burst through. The same held true for the scar he

had just entered through. It was like a dam had burst, pouring a hyper-condensed mix of fireworks and lava through the spatial tear.

The current shot forward through the Void, pushing forward for tens of thousands of meters, veritably forming a luminescent river of pure destruction. Similar scenes could be seen all around him, and the whole Void was lit up.

Only then did Zac see what his surroundings really looked like. He wasn't alone. In fact, there were tens of thousands of people in his immediate surroundings, though it was impossible to tell how close they actually were in a place like this. Most of the bodies were fallen mortals who had probably been sucked into the void, but there was some activity as well. And those who were alive mostly emitted the auras of Hegemons.

A few were busy looting the floating corpses, but most were waiting right by one spatial tear or another, clearly having a similar idea of survival as himself. Some had been too eager or simply unlucky, and their disintegrated corpses had been swept away along with the rivers of clashing energies that had formed all over.

That didn't actually stop people, and Zac frowned when he saw a few particularly powerful Hegemons cover themselves in immensely powerful barriers before they pushed into the churning chaos that covered the spatial tears. Why were they in such a rush? This place was lethal, but Hegemons would surely be able to survive a while in this place.

The scene gave Zac a sinking feeling, and he understood that this place might be far more dangerous than it seemed. He hesitantly looked at the weakening glow of the nearby spatial tear, wondering if he should attempt an escape as well. But even the fading energy between mortals was far beyond he could handle, at least without the help of the remnants.

A shudder made Zac look down with surprise, and he saw how [Love's Bond] took on its backpack form by itself as he felt a wave of hunger in his mind. He heard the clattering of chains, and he hurriedly handed over the egg that was still in his hands. He heard the lid opening for a moment, before quickly slamming shut again.

Soon, I will be stronger, Alea's voice echoed in his mind before the coffin shrunk again.

He sensed a wave of contentment before he lost the connection, but Zac was still elated. With such a statement from her, he could let go of any worries that her soul or foundations had been damaged by taking on the Blood Effigy's attacks. In fact, it looked like she would evolve soon enough.

But just as one issue was solved, another one cropped up. The spatial tear that was supposed to be his ticket out from the Void suddenly collapsed, unable to withstand the barrage from outside. Left was a long river of rootless energy and vast darkness.

He was stuck.