

The Fall 791

Chapter 791: Leviathan

The final Twilight Ascent had been far more dangerous than the previous ones, especially considering the fallout. Unfortunately, that hadn't been enough for the System to deem it necessary to award Zac another limited title slot or title permanence. But it had at least adjusted the reward.

Zac had seen historical examples of status screens in his missives, and the first position in the E-grade Twilight Ascent would generally provide between 6% and 10% attributes, along with a maximum of 8% effectiveness. Generally, the slaughter-based trials provided the highest rewards, which wasn't a surprise considering the System's predilection for carnage.

His special version far surpassed the historical records even if it technically was a Dao-based trail, and it was way better compared to the titles that he had gathered so far. Seeing the massive boost the new title provided, Zac doubted he would be able to find anything better in the short run.

Limited Titles would get better and better for every grade, eventually far outstripping the normal ones. Even then, the Limited Titles you could gain in the D-grade rarely reached a boost of 15% to any attributes from what Zac had heard. So it was an extremely welcome addition, and Zac once more opened his status screen, partly out of boredom.

Name

Zachary Atwood

Level

123

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, Runebinder, Runic Erudition, Grand Fate

Limited Titles

Tower of Eternity Sector All-Star – 14th, Equanimity, Heart of Fire, Big Axe Gladiator, The Final Twilight

Dao

Branch of the War Axe – Early, Fragment of the Coffin – Peak, Fragment of the Bodhi – Peak

Core

[E] Duplicity

Strength

12709 [Increase: 123%. Efficiency: 287%]

Dexterity

5097 [Increase: 88%. Efficiency: 206%]

Endurance

8740 [Increase: 116,5%. Efficiency: 275%]

Vitality

7256 [Increase: 104,5%. Efficiency: 262%]

Intelligence

2035 [Increase: 82%. Efficiency: 206%]

Wisdom

4215 [Increase: 89%. Efficiency: 216%]

Luck

540 [Increase: 106%. Efficiency: 229%]

Free Points

Nexus Coins

[D] 933 662

No title permanence meant The Final Twilight-title had replaced the one called Weight of Sin, which was the aggressively mediocre title he received upon climbing the Memorysteel Mountain. The long downtime had also allowed him to fill out his three recently opened nodes using the leftover kill energy from Uona along with some crystals.

He was lucky to have taken out a small hill of Supreme Nexus Crystals just before the bubble's arrays sealed his skill fractals and Spatial Rings. They didn't help against the constant drain on his energy reserves that kept him weakened, but as long as he pushed the energy he absorbed straight into his

nodes, the siphoning array didn't manage to snatch it all. That way, he had managed to gain the three missing levels on his human side, where he had put the free attributes into Dexterity as usual.

Unfortunately, he couldn't use the energy from the crystals for much else. He had surreptitiously tried activating [Surging Vitality] with Void Energy to recover his wounds though. It had worked, but the bubble actually started vibrating slightly in response, prompting Zac to hurriedly stop before the warden noticed.

Being unable to activate his healing skill didn't matter all that much though. Most of the damage to his body was to his foundations and nodes, which wasn't something [Surging Vitality] could help with. His improvements on that side were slow, but he was definitely in far better shape compared to when getting captured.

His nodes didn't feel like they were teetering on the brink of collapse any longer, though it would probably take another month or two of rest before they were back in peak condition. The cracks from conjuring another Glimpse of Chaos would most likely take even longer to recuperate from, but the event hadn't saddled any worrisome lasting changes from the looks of it. It wasn't great, but Zac knew that it would take most people years to recover from a situation like his. If not for his weird constitution, he would perhaps be permanently crippled.

The pathways on his shoulders had been widened a bit, and a couple of new engravings had formed, giving them a stronger aura of Creation and Oblivion. It was like every time he conjured a chaos pattern, [Cyclic Strike] was somewhat altered in a direction better suited for its new purpose. Zac even looked forward to seeing what it would turn into after getting anointed five times.

Perhaps he would freely be able to infuse his skills with the power of the remnants by that point, allowing them to reach the same terrifying levels of force as when he fought in the Twilight Ocean. As for the remnants, they hadn't woken up at all since getting shoved into the refurbished fractal prison.

But the fractal had already begun draining the remnants again in an ironic mirroring of his own situation. Just as Zac had hoped, the stream of purified energy was greater now compared to before, with more energy enforcing both his soul and his constitution. This proved his idea worked; that each set of remnants was like a multiplier to his cultivation speed for his Soul Strengthening Method and improving his bloodline.

The risks would obviously increase with each set he gathered, but Zac's soul had made tremendous improvements since getting stuck with the first splinter. He didn't sense any instability in his mental state at all, though he knew that the effect of the remnants was extremely hard to catch.

In other good news, the quest that Alvod Jondir had pushed upon him when they met in the Twilight Chasm had simply disappeared around a week after he was whisked away on the journey. From his prison, it was impossible to tell what that meant. His best guess was that Twilight Harbor had finally collapsed, losing its status as a sanctioned capital and prompting all open quests to close.

Other possibilities were the death of the Eveningtide Asura or him simply dissolving the quest. In either case, it was one less thing to worry about, though Zac couldn't help but wonder if it wasn't preferable if he was caught by Alvod rather than the terrifying beast in the distance. After all, things had seemingly turned out pretty well for the Asura, and Zac had inadvertently helped with his plans quite a bit.

Zac shook his head before closing his status screen, once more resting his back against the cage as he gazed upon the vast darkness around him. If not for his capture, he would probably be home by now. Yet he found himself here, unable to help his people at all. He hadn't gained any screen of the Incursion's status either, leaving him completely in the dark of how they fared.

But he would need to find a way to save himself before he could save his people.

His attributes had skyrocketed since traveling to the Twilight Harbor, to the point that his effective attributes had pretty much tripled. He remembered he had just barely passed 4,000 Strength around the time Leandra returned to Earth. Now he had over 12,000, while his Efficiency had increased as well.

Add to that the less quantifiable improvements, such as the destructiveness of his evolved Daos, his upgraded weapon, his evolved skills, and his further awakened bloodline, and you could almost say he had been reborn in the Twilight Harbor. He was even confident that he would be able to take on ten copies of his previous self without breaking a sweat.

But what did that matter to the enormous beast dragging him to some unknown place? This thing considered Hegemons to be tasty snacks. Zac even doubted that an Annihilation Sphere right in its head would manage to harm it.

The days passed and Zac started to wonder if he'd ever get out of this place. But finally, there was a change. The Leviathan emitted the powerful spatial ripples that were the tell-tale sign that it was about to enter another dimension again. That alone wasn't surprising, but when his prison passed through the vortex, his eyes widened.

One Leviathan had turned into three, each one looking identical to the other two. At the same time, the number of bubble prisons had almost doubled, and Zac looked at the scene with shock. He still hadn't found any helpful clues, but he mentally started to prepare himself for one final struggle.

No matter what was going on, the fact that these monsters had started to gather up possibly meant they were closing in on their destination. Of course, there was not much to prepare. He had hurriedly stowed away his axe the moment he decided to not escape, fearful that being armed would incur the wrath of the Leviathan.

Meanwhile, [Love's Bond] had turned unresponsive since he had fed it the mysterious egg. He would perhaps be able to force it into its shield form, but he would rather not unless absolutely necessary. Soon enough, the three Leviathan's opened a huge gate and entered together, and Zac's heart trembled as he felt the tremendous waves of Spatial Dao on the other side.

This was it.

A moment later, his bubble passed through. A sudden burst of radiance forced Zac to cover his eyes for a second, and he realized they should have entered in a proper dimension this time around. However, any thoughts on their location were thrown to the back of his mind as he saw what the river of bubbles was flying toward.

He had been naïve. Those little worms that had dragged him here weren't fit to be called Leviathans. The thing in front of him was a true Leviathan. It almost felt like his mind was breaking from estimating

just how large this beast was, but one thing was for sure; it was not just the size of a planet like Earth, it even dwarfed some of the continental plates that made the Twilight Harbor.

It looked quite similar to the Space Fish that had taken him here, but this ancestor had clearly undergone a series of bloodline evolutions compared to Zac's chaperone. The difference wasn't just like the difference between Vul, the Barghest Alpha, and its brethren. It was like the difference between a dragon and a small lizard.

Looking at the Leviathan felt like looking at the Laws of space. A lazy wave from any one of its innumerable tentacles caused massive cracks in space, and the sail-like fin on its back was massive enough to blot out the Heavens themselves. A nebula churned around it, almost looking like cosmic waters.

Its body was also covered in huge scripts that almost seemed to be alive. Together, they formed some sort of natural formation, one that was far beyond his scope of understanding.

Zac had never seen anything like this before, not even in his Dao visions. He knew there were impossibly large beasts wandering the endless Multiverse, but it was another thing entirely to be placed in front of one. As for its power, it was definitely not just the equivalent of a Monarch.

This was a proper Primordial Beast, one that emitted a noticeably stronger aura compared to the Havarok Autarch he saw the other day, though it still didn't quite reach the level of Be'Zi or her husband. Why was something like this here in the frontier?

Or had he actually left the frontier already, dragged to another sector entirely by the Space Fish?

A flash of light dragged Zac out of his thoughts and his eyes away from the terrifying being he was floating toward, just in time to see his guide disappear in a puff of spatial energy. Only then did he properly take in the situation, and his heart sunk even further. His group captives were just the latest arrivals.

There were innumerable bubbles all around the behemoth. Another vortex appeared in the distance, and yet another beast chaperone came dragging a few hundred bubbles. Just like the one that had taken him here, the beast disappeared in a spatial ripple the moment it emerged, leaving its captives to their fate.

Were the smaller beasts living inside their parent? Or were they just clones?

Even without a beast to guide them, the spheres kept moving in an orderly fashion. But Zac's horror only mounted when he realized where he was heading; the Leviathan's gaping maw. It was no wonder the smaller beasts hadn't eaten any more captives as they traveled. They didn't dare steal their leader's dinner.

Zac's heart beat like a drum as he scrambled for a way to survive. He had hoped that he had been captured to become an indentured worker or something considering he had been left alive. If that had been the case, he would have a shot at escaping by using his Void Energy. But now, he knew he couldn't wait any longer. He could feel it – if he entered that impossibly large maw, his odds of survival were essentially zero.

The Leviathan's mouth was large enough to swallow planets whole, but it wasn't the sharp fangs that worried him. Its maw was filled with a terrifying cloud of spatial destruction, far beyond any spatial tears he had ever seen. There was no way he would survive even a second in such an environment, yet he and the other bubbles flew toward it with blazing speed.

Terror overwrote the overwhelming pain from using the power of the remnants as a storm of Dao and Mental Energy entered the two pathway highways on his shoulders, where Axe and Coffin were forced together. Luckily, the beast guarding his bubble was gone, giving him a small window of opportunity. What little Oblivion Energy he had saved up in his Soul Core was dragged out, acting as the catalyst for the Annihilation Sphere.

A small ball full of endless destruction rapidly grew between his hands, and Zac felt a burst of rage bubble in his mind. The shock along with the damage left behind by the remnants had made him susceptible to the whispers of the splinters. But Zac forcibly took control of the madness, using it to squeeze out a little bit more energy from his harried mind.

Meanwhile, he activated [Piercing Gaze] in search of any weak spot in his prison with the help of Void Energy, ignoring the small shudder that spread across the cage. Unfortunately, the sphere used concepts far beyond his understanding or scope of what his skill could decipher, so Zac could only slam his attack into a random spot on the wall with righteous indignation.

The satisfying scene of his cage cracking like a dome of glass didn't appear. Zac was dismayed to realize there was a hidden spatial barrier between himself and the surface of his cage. It was just a thin film, yet it felt like his attack was forced to cross hundreds of miles to reach the wall.

By that point, his energy was almost completely expended. The sphere holding him captive only rippled a bit before a series of esoteric patterns suddenly appeared across its surface, joining the ones that Zac suspected were responsible for the restrictions and energy drain. Zac scrambled for other ideas, but it was helpless.

He still had access to his Void Energy, but that didn't do him much good. His weapon was sealed inside his spatial ring, but he knew that his skills would be worthless in this situation in either case. Others had unleashed far more powerful attacks than his without any luck. The high-concept Dao inside his Annihilation Sphere had been his only hope.

There was no way that [Love's Bond] would do any good in this situation either. More importantly, he was worried that activating skills would prompt the Leviathan to lash out at him prematurely, based on the new runes that covered his bubble. His only hope now was that his cage would break the moment it entered the huge maw of the Leviathan and that he'd survive with the help of [Void Zone] long enough to swim out of there.

However, Zac looked around with confusion as his own sphere suddenly made a turn and diverged from the others'. Almost all of the innumerable cages were dragged toward the beast's maw, but his own joined a few thousand others that instead shot toward the huge fin on its back. It didn't take long to figure out what differed between his own and the other spheres either; the engravings.

His own cage was covered in dense scripts thanks to using the Annihilation Sphere, as were the others who had avoided disaster. The markings weren't identical, but they rather held varying echoes of the

Dao, where Zac could sense a mix of Pure Death and Conflict on his own – the ground components of his Annihilation Sphere.

Another prison that wasn't flying too far from him actually emitted temporal fluctuations, and Zac spotted a humanoid man sitting inside with closed eyes as though he was in the middle of meditation. Meanwhile, the bubbles which had no such unique markings things moved toward the beast's mouth.

It didn't look like patterns were based on cultivation strength either. He saw at least two Peak or at least High Hegemons shooting toward the mouth, both of them desperately banging on the barrier as they were dragged toward their doom. He had spotted them in the Void outside the Twilight Harbor before, and he had seen the shocking attacks they had unleashed in an attempt to escape back into the main dimension.

His eyes met one of the other's for a moment, and he saw a chaotic mix of emotions in the Revenant's eyes. Confusion, fear, rage and indignation. Most importantly, reluctance. Reluctance to have their path ended like this, to become food to some monstrous beast. Zac turned away, unable to look on as they were dragged into the spatial storm.

He felt so weak and helpless, but more so, he was filled with relief. The Annihilation Sphere hadn't managed to break him out of his prison, but it looked like it had allowed him to survive the first culling. Something about the energies he had unleashed had piqued the Leviathan's interest, saving him from a gristly end.

The question was, what was it planning?