

## The Fall 795

### Chapter 795: Unboxing

The insides of the Contribution Store were quite large, with a fifty-meter wide disk where just as many clerks stood in attendance. Zac noted that they all wore the same white robes, with a similar insignia as the one Murbot wore. However, Zac sensed that these people weren't someone standing above him in the Orom's hierarchy, but rather below.

These people emitted extremely faint auras, and Zac guessed their attributes were locked at something like 2-300 at best. Most likely, they were part of the servants, the people who made up the largest group of those captured.

Some of the disks were occupied with customers, and Zac noted that anyone using the services had their surroundings blurred, making it impossible to see what was going on. Zac thought for a second before he walked over to one of the free attendants, this one a middle-aged human.

"Welcome, how can I help?" the man said with a smile.

"Uh, I'm new here. Do you have a catalog or something I can look through?" Zac asked.

"Oh, young master is part of the latest batch?" the man sighed, and Zac could see some jealousy flash in the man's eyes before it was gone. "Of course, the Exchange provides a catalog free of charge."

He handed over a crystal next, but Zac looked at it with confusion. How was he supposed to activate it with the brand on his hand?

"The energy seal is a lot more complex than you might expect," the man said with a small smile. "Just try to activate it like normal."

Zac was a bit skeptical, but he followed the instructions. Suddenly, his Cosmic Energy flowed freely, entering and activating the crystal without issue.

"You can divide items in the Orom World between authorized and unauthorized. The seal will not prevent you from using authorized items, while unauthorized treasures will be locked out," the clerk explained.

Zac had already read about this on the signs outside, but he was surprised how seamlessly it worked. The prison array on his hand was clearly high-quality if it could make distinctions like that on the fly.

"Where do I authorize my items?" Zac asked.

"Do you see the rooms over there?" The man said as he pointed to the left. "Those are unsealing chambers, one of the few places where you can activate your spatial ring. You can take out any items you require there and have them authorized. You should beware though, the room is covered in arrays that would detect if you try to take out something dangerous or detrimental to the Orom. If you take out such offensive treasures, you will be deducted Contribution Points, perhaps even executed."

"If I had items like that I wouldn't be here," Zac cursed under his breath.

This Primordial Beast was just too careful, maintaining such restrictions even on E-grade cultivators. Still, that wasn't all bad. The more draconic the measures, the better it might actually be for him. The more focus they put on places like these unsealing chambers, the less attention they might place on other parts of the Orom where they wouldn't expect Spatial Rings to work.

For now, Zac focused on the situation at hand. He had been given 1,000 Contribution Points, and he might as well make the most of the situation. However, the more he read the more his brows furrowed together.

"This is it?" Zac eventually asked.

"Well, we are right at the end of a cycle, and it was an unusually long one. No new materials have appeared for almost 800 years, the last time the Orom fed," the man helplessly explained. "However, there are also better items available, though young master needs to increase his standing first. There are also some unique attuned items in their respective settlement that you will not find in the others."

Zac nodded in understanding.

"When will the stock be replenished then?" Zac asked.

It was a bit morbid to ask about the scraps from the innumerable people the Orom had killed and consumed, but he couldn't be picky in a place like this. He, in particular, required large amounts of resources to progress. If his prison escape dragged out, he would definitely need every advantage he could get to stay ahead.

"The servants are fast at work categorizing the newly acquired items," the clerk explained. "It usually takes around two months until the process is complete. At that point, the items will be added to the stores or made available in other ways. Some treasures might appear before that, though, as you new arrivals exchange items for points."

Zac thoughtfully nodded. The last part was the result of an odd rule in the Orom World, where you could only sell outside items to the Orom itself, in exchange for Purchase Points. However, if you crafted Pills or grew some herbs inside the Orom, you could sell them freely, though at a price set by the Contribution Store.

It seemed like an odd rule in a place designed to extract as much progress as possible out of the captives, but Zac guessed it was the result of some other incident far in the past. According to Murbot, the Orom World had been extremely lax at the start, but things had become increasingly draconic over the eons as highly motivated cultivators kept causing chaos in their attempts to escape.

"Alright. For now, I'll take a Low-grade Cosmos Sack and an Elementary Cave Kit," Zac eventually said.

The Cosmos Sack wasn't anything impressive, except for the fact that it was an authorized item. Its size was just a tenth of his better Spatial Rings, but that was more than enough to carry miscellaneous items he needed during his stay here. There were far better versions as well, but things got expensive very quickly. The Cosmos Sack he bought cost just 10 Contribution Points, whereas the worst Spatial Rings cost over 500.

The Elementary Cave Kit cost 50 Contribution Points was a set of five arrays meant to facilitate cultivation. Three of the arrays were for cultivation; a gathering array to increase energy density, a

purity array to strengthen the attunement of the cave, and a clarity array that worked like the incense and prayer mats in his possession.

The last two were an isolation array that would allow you to cultivate without interruptions, and finally a 'climate array' that dealt with everything from temperature, humidity, to things such as cleaning and pest control. Zac didn't really benefit from the Energy Density or the attunement for his normal cultivation, but it might be needed for something else; his soul.

The oceans in his soul had probably surpassed what was intended by the [Nine Reincarnations Manual] already, and his soul had taken another leap forward after taking on the second Splinter of Oblivion. He just needed to rest up and consolidate his gains, after which he was ready to take the next step.

The Elementary Cave Kit was heavily subsidized as well, to the point that it was almost a freebie for newcomers. But apart from that, it was slim pickings. Zac also got a more detailed map of the Orom World for 5 Contribution Points after which he walked over to the unsealing chambers.

The room was empty when Zac entered, and he could feel how a number of arrays activated the moment the door closed behind him. It actually felt like he had entered a different dimension altogether, probably a security measure in case a Monarch took out some terrifying offensive talisman with the power to destroy a country.

A crystal lay waiting on a table, a burst of information entered Zac's mind after instilling the crystal with some energy. Zac mulled things over for a few seconds before pile after pile of various Supreme-grade crystals appeared in the room before entering his new Cosmos Sack. After that, Zac took out various herbs he had gathered in the Twilight Ocean.

He was focusing on things that would benefit his cultivation in the short run, either through direct digestion or after being turned into pills. After the natural treasures, he also took out a series of arrays. Each time he took out an Array Disk, a presence descended on the room before the item was scanned.

His Soul Cultivation Arrays and specialized energy gathering arrays passed just fine, but when he tried taking out an escape talisman, it immediately combusted. Thankfully, a few of his practice axes weren't stopped, but he still didn't dare take out [Verun's Bite] in case the Orom would destroy it.

Soon enough, a small hill of items had entered his new Cosmos Sack, at which point Zac was content. Luckily, it was cheap enough to authorize and transfer cultivation resources. Basic Cultivation resources were free, which included all types of Nexus Crystals and most common herbs.

The more unique herbs Zac had taken out from the depths of the Twilight Ocean were scanned for 1 Contribution Points each, and the arrays weren't that much more expensive. By the time Zac was done, he had only spent 34 Contribution Points, saving the rest for when the other resources appeared.

Of course, Zac didn't immediately leave the chamber. This was one of the few places where he could freely open Spatial Treasures, and he had been waiting for weeks to find out exactly what kind of treasures he had been carrying. His heart beat with anticipation as he took out one item after another from his pockets.

First, he checked the Cosmos Sacks he had picked up in the Void and from the cultivators in the City of Ancients. Altogether, there were dozens of them, yet their combined value wasn't anything too

impressive. Unsurprisingly, it looked even the ones he got from the Void had exclusively been owned by E-grade cultivators and lower, and the gains were thereafter.

The only exceptions were a couple of Manuals that seemed higher-quality than anything he had back on Earth, along with a Body-tempering manual. Most of their information was sealed, but Zac still put them in his Authorized Sack. There were also two high-quality herbs that Zac didn't recognize, along with a few thousand Twilight Fruits.

After picking out what he wanted, Zac threw each Cosmos Sack onto another array in the room. Space twisted, and a moment later the sack was gone and Zac had gained a couple of Purchase Points. The items in each Cosmos Sack provided between 0 and 2 points. It wasn't much, but it helped cover some of his expenses until now while freeing up his pockets.

After performing a mental tally, Zac realized why the Orom was so insistent on keeping a monopoly. It actually paid less than a tenth compared to the prices quoted in the store, which no doubt helped it save a lot on expenses. It was a bit annoying, but Zac wasn't too interested in making more points in any case.

Instead, he focused on the Spatial Rings he had looted. Most of them had been taken from bodies that emitted fierce auras, and he had high hopes for their contents.

And he wasn't disappointed.

The first ring contained a vast assortment of arrays, Cosmic Crystals, unique treasures, and information missives. It was a shocking collection of items, far surpassing any of the bags he had looted in the Twilight Ocean, and going through them all would take months. There were thousands of other items as well, orderly arranged ring's pocket space.

Sets of equipment that seemed to be D-grade, weapons, tools for blacksmithing, raw metals, and ores. Zac looked upon the huge array of items with wonder for a few minutes until he finally put the ring back in his pocket without taking out anything. The treasures in this thing were definitely worth a whole pile of D-grade Nexus Coins, but he didn't want to take out things in the Orom World unless necessary, both to avoid any unforeseen risks and the expenditure.

His mental energy swept through one ring after another, and while most had clearly just belonged to the wealthy among the younger generation, but a few of them had been owned by proper Hegemons. One thing he noticed was the huge discrepancy in wealth between the D-grade cultivators.

A few barely had a few Cosmic Crystals or treasures to their names, while the items were cheap mass-produced stuff. It was just like the broken-down Cosmos Sack he had looted from the Hegemon skeleton that had become an octopus' home. He had been way poor, no matter if you compared to Zac himself or the previous owner of the first ring he scanned.

Meanwhile, a few rings had hundreds of impressive-looking raw materials, everything from stacks of jade boxes containing natural treasures to slabs of shimmering metals. If converted into Nexus Coins, each such item would probably be worth anything from a few hundred to tens of thousands of D-grade Nexus Coins.

Two rings only contained mountains of low-grade cultivation materials, perhaps some Clan's stock of resources taken away when the chaos ensued. The quality of the items was much lower than what he had already sent back home to earth with Vilari, but the quantities more than made up for it.

Zac's mind was abuzz as he kept a mental tally of his estimates, and he eventually passed 4 C-grade Nexus Coins by the time he had gone through all the rings. It wasn't like his wealth had skyrocketed, but that was a huge windfall, and one not tainted with the bad blood of Leandra's gift. Furthermore, there were hundreds of items, treasures, and materials he hadn't included or given low price tags since he had no idea what they were worth.

For all he knew, the actual number might be five times his estimate.

He had also located a bunch of items he could directly benefit from, including both Attribute Fruits and Dao Treasures to replenish his dwindling stocks. But he left those items behind as well, wanting to plan out his next move before wasting any more Purchase Points.

Next, he eagerly took out the Spatial Gem that had supposedly belonged to Aia Ouro, and his eyes lit up when he swept his mind through the crystal. It was extremely well-stocked with all kinds of arrays and related materials. More importantly, the Spatial Tool contained two different types of crystals that emitted energy fluctuations that resonated with his soul.

There were even three densely engraved boxes, each one containing what seemed to be a supreme cultivation treasure, two of which clearly related to the soul. The last one was a piece of black glass, which Zac had no idea what it entailed. But considering it was treated with the same importance as treasures that gave off even greater mental fluctuations than the grass he had used for cultivation in the Twilight Chasm, it had to be something special.

Finally, Zac turned toward the final item; Uona's spatial ring. From the looks of it, Clan Noz'Valadir was more powerful than Hive Ouro, and Uona was more of an elite than Aia Ouro, so he had great hopes for her Spatial Treasure. However, Zac's eyes widened with horror the moment he infused the ring with energy.

It was like he had set off some chain reaction when activating the item, as he saw the spatial pocket rapidly collapse. He desperately started taking out one item after another, focusing on the materials and items that looked the most expensive or useful. There was simply too little time though, and he was dismayed to find his mental suddenly tendril cut off, and the ring crumbled a moment later.

In front of him, five items were resting on the scanning table; a box containing six sanguine gems shimmering with dark energies, two pieces of metal that seemed even better than anything he had found in the Twilight Ocean, a vial of blood, and a set of Information Crystals.

That was all he had managed to take out before the ring crumbled, but the rest were mostly mountains of loot from those she had murdered in the trail by the looks of it. These five items should have been among the best things in her possession. The array scanned one item after another, and Zac was surprised to see it took as long to scan the vial as the rest of the items combined.

Not only that, he noticed that scanning the blood cost a whopping 100 Contribution Points, even though the process normally was almost free. Zac had thought the odd gems to be the most valuable, but it looked it was the blood. Zac thought back to his battle with Uona, and the events that had preceded it.

He had wondered where she got the energy to raise so many blood thralls while also nurturing that terrifying blood effigy.

Was this blood perhaps the answer?

The vial was sealed, but even then, he felt a sense of pressure emanating from the swirling blood inside. It should be a Pseudo D-grade item at most, considering she had brought it into the trial. But it was also possible that Uona had managed to sneak inside a proper D-grade material with the help of her ancestor.

In either case, Zac hoped it would be useful for Verun to finally make the push toward Peak E-grade, and perhaps even set the foundations for evolving to D-grade in the future. He stowed away the items in his Cosmos Sack before finally leaving the sealed chamber and the contribution store.

From there Zac traveled Freedom's End for a few more hours, learning snippets of information here and there. Eventually, he picked an empty house, of which there were quite a few, and settled down for the day to digest what had happened.

As he looked down at the street from his window, Zac pondered on what he should do next. His first instinct had been to escape as quickly as possible to go back to Earth, using his bloodline to circumvent the restrictions in this place.

But was that really the right move?

The incursion back on Earth had already started, it was too late for him to do anything about it. Not that he could, in either case. The level limit was 100, while he had reached 123. The cost to enter as reinforcement would be just shocking, if he was allowed inside at all. He couldn't be certain, but he didn't think it was a coincidence the opportunity was awarded while he was gone. It wasn't an opportunity meant for him.

He still couldn't enter the inheritance trial either, and according to Leandra, it would be years before the Dimensional Seed reappeared in the Million Gates territory. Meanwhile, his actions in the Twilight Ocean had no doubt caused some ripples, and he couldn't put his whole faith in Catheya's ability to turn the situation in his favor.

Perhaps, hiding out in a space fish for a couple of months while things calmed down wasn't the worst of ideas.