

The Fall 886

Chapter 886: Ramsi Wall

The event was about to start. There was no time to waste, so the two hurried into a side tunnel that Zac had never seen in other waystations. Zac could feel how the rock around them was infused with a mix of unique materials and arrays which both gave off an odd pressure – no doubt a measure to keep any tunneling beasts away. There was a line of reinforced doors, and Zac simply picked the closest one as it looked the fanciest.

“Only Core Disciples can use those...” Vai hesitated, but she quickly dropped the subject as Zac walked inside.

The cave was completely exposed to the outside, which allowed the two to get a full sense of the marvelous scene in the sky. Zac had never seen anything like the emerging swirl. It wasn’t really a gate or a breach, it didn’t show anything from the dimension on the other side. Instead, it looked like millions of crystals had been dragged together and turned into a miniature model of a galaxy.

Of course, even if it was a miniature, it covered half the sky, and Zac guessed it was hundreds of miles across. It still hadn’t completely stabilized, but it was already exuding shocking amounts of energy and Dao. Most of it was space-related and thus not very useful to Zac, but [Spiritual Void] was happily gobbling up huge chunks of energy.

The beasts that made the Ramsi Wall their home had already come out in full force, and a glance out the side showed the cliffside was completely covered with E-grade beasts. Meanwhile, thousands of Beast Kings were already floating in the sky. Even then, there was an almost eerie silence as not a single roar was heard.

It was a bit nerve-wracking to see one beast after another emerge all around them. But apart from the beast-repelling measures, the caves were also hidden by extremely potent illusion arrays. They hadn’t seen any of these caves on the way into the waystation, and none of the beasts seemed interested in getting close to their area. Thanks to this, the two could enjoy the opportunity uninterrupted and with a perfect view.

This was the advantage of Core Disciples. The repelling measures were strongest in the middle, while the view of some of the caves was probably blocked by the massive Beat Kings in the sky.

No meteorite had been spat out from the anomaly so far, but Zac guessed it wasn’t far away. Something was building toward a crescendo. At first, Zac mostly joined Vai out of curiosity, but the more he looked, the more he felt there was something about the still-growing swirl in the sky that called to him. It contained some sort of truth that resonated with him, but he couldn’t quite figure it out.

“Hey, give me one of those flowers,” Zac suddenly said.

“You want to gain a Spatial Dao?” Vai asked with confusion.

“No,” Zac said with a shake of his head. “But I feel I can still gain something for my path from this place.”

Vai nodded and took out a jar for Zac, and after some hesitation, she took out another one for herself.

“Just let the bud melt in your mouth like a candy,” Vai said as she plucked the pit and sat down.

Zac followed suit, and a mysterious energy soon spread through his body, traveling along the spiritual pathways he'd created with [Thousand Lights Avatar]. Every moment, he felt himself growing closer to the mysteries of the cosmos, like he and the swirl in the sky were one and the same. Vai's eyes had completely glazed over as she looked at the vortex with rapt attention, and the two sat in silence as the sky opened itself like a flower.

For five minutes, nothing changed except for the building anticipation that was only fanned on by the [Stargazer Camelia]. But finally, with a ripple in the heart of the vortex, the first meteor broke into the Mystic Realm. It was like a radiant beacon of pure unadulterated space, and its splendor was only amplified by the shimmering backdrop of the vortex.

After the first, the others followed, and soon thousands of shimmering meteorites made their way toward the Ramsi Wall. Most of them contained various facets of space, yet some of them stood out with their own insights. Who knew how long these fragments had traveled in the vast beyond, gradually being instilled with the underpinning truths of the Heavens.

Together, they formed a marvelous system unlike anything Zac had seen before.

Even if the scene wasn't as overwhelming as the solemn supremacy of Ultom, Zac was still filled with inspiration. Since his last epiphany, he had spent most of his brainpower trying to figure out the intricacies and practical details of the [Void Vajra Sublimation]. Even now, he wasn't sure how to actually train with his experimental method.

The problem wasn't that the direction from back then was wrong, but rather that he lacked in foundations.

There was too much about his bloodline he didn't understand – how it worked, what the concept of the Void encompassed. For example, he pictured his heart cultivation as an extension of [Void Zone], where his heart would be shielded from outside manipulations. But he had no idea how [Void Zone] worked, apart from the fact it used Void Energy.

Without that understanding, how could he create a proper method? This was one of the main things he wanted to gain a better grasp on before finding the next piece of the seal. The next part of the seal might be able to provide him with the answers he lacked, but it might not. The stronger his foundations were, the greater the chance of success.

And now, he was finally making some progress. As the bud of the [Stargazer Camelia] melted in his mouth, it felt like his body was becoming one with the cosmos. His body was no longer mundane bone and muscles – it had become the starstuff that made up the firmament itself. Looking at the swirling vortex in the sky, it felt like he was looking at the mysterious vortices in his cells.

Except they moved in the opposite direction.

There was a lesson there, and it wasn't the only one. The arms of the vortex followed mysterious laws as well – laws whose echoes he could see in the star system in his soul. It even felt like the falling meteors had created a unique formation that was constantly changing and evolving. Life and Death. Time and Space. They might belong to different peaks and embody different truths. But ultimately, they were part of the same tapestry; the Grand Dao.

But what about the Void?

Space and the Void. The Heavens and the Void. The Void was a mirror, an inversion. The Void between the layers of reality was bereft of actual spacetime, a bizarre expression of the absolute absence of the Dao of Space. In the same vein, the pure concept of Void, whose shadow one could see in the unique heritage of Ultom, was the absolute absence of the Heavens, of the Dao itself.

That was how [Void Zone] worked – it was an inversion of the Dao, of the building blocks of reality itself. But how could he make use of this concept? He could instinctively tell that there was absolutely no way to cultivate a Dao of the Void, it would be a paradox. At the same time, it wasn't just an intangible concept. His bloodline proved it was real.

The exact truth of the matter was too complex, too hard to grasp. They might very well be some of the unsolvable mysteries of the Universe. However, he did slowly gain an idea on how to swap out boundlessness with Void in the Body Tempering method. For now, he wouldn't need to understand everything. He should be able to use Void Energy as a crutch until he reached a higher stage where he had a better understanding of the universe.

Zac had long forgotten about the passage of time, forgotten about where he was and why he was here. There was only the swirl and the void inversion of the Sutras in his mind. But as the flickering meteors flew closer, so did Zac eventually return to reality, where he found Vai intently staring at him from a few meters away.

"What's wrong?" Zac asked with confusion.

"I- ah, nothing," Vai said with rosy cheeks. "It's just, you emitted very interesting energy signatures just now. Did you have an epiphany?"

"Something like that," Zac smiled. "What about you?"

"I did!" Vai said with undisguised excitement, her eyes almost sparkling like the falling meteorites. "After centuries of being at an impasse, I actually made progress with my Dao! It's a miracle!"

"It's the reward that comes with taking risks," Zac nodded.

"You don't understand," Vai slowly said with a shake of her head as she looked at Zac with an inscrutable expression. "My momentum was gone and my path of cultivation was essentially severed. My fate had been decided. Even if I got to witness this place, I shouldn't have been able to take such a big step forward. But since I met you, it almost seems like fate has become malleable and everything is in flux. I don't understand how this is, I have never read of a phenomenon like this."

"I mean, this is the first time you've left your cloister in quite a while, right?" Zac said. "It might just be the change of scenery."

"If that was enough, we would have been sent to these places whether we liked it or not. If risking your life was enough, all these bottlenecked warriors wouldn't be stuck for the rest of their lives," Vai said with a shake of her head. "I tried everything. I risked my life more than once inside environments designed to force inspiration. Only after decades of failure did I finally give up and changed direction to research. Everything has its place, an order in the cosmos. But something about you is breaking convention."

Zac was about to refute Vai's word, but he stopped himself. Was there some truth to what he said? There was more than one sign that his unique constitution had allowed him to break convention, giving him a unique type of freedom in the Multiverse. But could his condition even affect those around him, reforging their fates?

Was something like that even possible? Or was Vai simply overestimating his importance to her breakthrough? Even with what she said, it was still a fact that she had spent over a thousand years researching and shoring up her foundations. With the recent encounters, she might simply have managed to transform all that hard work into newfound momentum.

"Well, the universe is full of mysteries," Zac eventually said. "If you think I'm helping your cultivation, then you can help me find some nice things in return."

"You. Always thinking of treasure," Vai huffed, but there was a small smile on her face.

The vortex eventually started to close, which was the starting signal for a gruesome melee on the outside. The meteorites had almost reached the wall by this point, and the beasts desperately fought each other to snatch them up.

"Your people cultivate in this chaos?" Zac asked with a shake of his head.

"Normally, the warriors would join in on the battle for those meteors. They are covered in mysterious markings containing secrets of space, and they can be refined into top-quality Spatial Tools," Vai explained. "But those people are all Hegemons who can fly and grapple with the beasts outside."

"Hm," Zac hummed as he looked out, but the gristly scene quickly doused any desire to join the struggle for those stones.

There were hundreds of Beast Kings in just this sector of the wall, and they fought tens of thousands of meters out into the air. He couldn't join in on the chaos without the ability to fly. Even if he risked it all with [Earthstrider], the reward wasn't worth it.

"Alright, let's go," Zac eventually said, and the two walked deeper into the waystation.

This base was just like the previous one – they had to walk over fifty kilometers through a tunnel until they finally reached the base proper. This time they were luckier than in the primal garden, at least. There was a third waystation somewhere on the Rimsi Wall, but they didn't need to find it as the connected realm here led the two closer to the seal.

Like that, another month passed as the duo delved deeper into the secret worlds of the Void Gate, where every day was a challenge. If it wasn't the powerful Beast Kings that could pop up out of nowhere, it was the environment itself. One of the Mystic Realms contained such a bone-chilling cold that layers of ice continuously appeared over their bodies.

Stopping for even a second would mean death, and they constantly had to expend massive amounts of Cosmic Energy to warm their bodies. If the Void Gate hadn't had the foresight to stock the waystations with unique spare robes that provided excellent insulation, Zac wasn't sure they would have survived the journey.

But while there were risks, there were also rewards, and both Zac's and Vai's Spatial Rings soon held unique treasures that would no doubt cause some waves on the outside. They still hadn't found anything at the level of a unique supreme-quality treasure, but they were still extremely high-quality items that had limitless demand and no supply.

For instance, Zac got his hands on a mysterious block of milky-white ice that exuded such cold that Zac almost lost his hands stowing it away. He was even forced to store it in a separate Spatial Ring since it somehow spread its blistering cold in the subspace of the spatial treasure. It wasn't useful for his cultivation, but he figured it could be turned into a weapon if need be – if he threw out that thing in the middle of a hostile army, only a wasteland with frozen corpses would remain after a few seconds.

There were other gains than treasures as well. Thanks to the constant battles against peak E-grade beasts and Beast Kings, Zac had long since reached level 146. He was even getting pretty close to breaking open his next node. Not only that, but he was making great progress on his Evolutionary Stance.

The simulated threats of the Orom Wilderness ultimately couldn't compare to the real thing. Fighting with Beast Kings or swarms of powerful peak E-grade beasts was completely different than fighting against early E-grade monsters while limited to 1,000 attribute points. Back then, he had always known in the back of his head he could fall back on his Void Energy if needed, which led to the stakes being lower.

Here, he was thrown into real life-and-death battles whether he liked it or not, and it was at this edge that real progress was made. He had already caught up to his Inexorable Stance which inevitably had seen some more practice in the Orom World, and fighting these powerful beasts kept bringing new insights.

The more he fought, the more he also felt he was getting closer to an important answer. It was all connected; his Daos, his path, and his stances. The movements of his combat stances contained the essence of his Dao and his understanding – couldn't that be the foundation for his Cultivator's core?

The Apostate of Order had codified everything in existence into the fractals that you saw in every aspect of cultivation. Why couldn't he do the same with his techniques? If he could form an "Evolutionary Pattern" and an "Inexorable Pattern", and then interweave and fuse the two with his understanding of duality, wouldn't that be a core perfectly suited for him?

That idea was still in an early stage, but he really felt it was a worthwhile avenue to pursue. For the next part of the seal, he wanted to perfect at least the first layers of his [Void Vajra Sublimation]. But he had already put aside the final two to find a path to Hegemony, and this seemed like a good place to start.

Zac wasn't the only one who made progress. After two weeks and a few more near-death-encounters, Vai finally formed her first Dao Branch. It was only one branch, but it was still an extremely impressive feat. She succeeded in what most bottlenecked cultivators could only dream of – rebooting their cultivation after having lost their momentum. She had also formed a pure Spatial Dao Branch, a path that was known to be notoriously difficult to cultivate.

Even two weeks later she was completely giddy, and any final reservations of hers were completely gone. Since then, the two were like locusts, snatching anything they could get their hands of without

getting themselves killed. Even Vivi was having a grand time feasting on all sorts of exotic animals. Zac was happy to see her so spirited – this was exactly what Heda had hoped for the plant to experience.

And all the while they got closer to the next piece of the puzzle. They had just reached a submerged Mystic Realm, and the pulse he had been welcomed with was almost as strong as the one he felt when they first broke into the Void Star.

Almost there.