

The Fall 276

Chapter 276: Runic Shaman

Zac put away the last of the treasures before he deactivated the arrays surrounding his courtyard. In the end, he needed over thirty Cosmos Sacks to fit everything he wasn't keeping for himself, and it would have been higher if Calrin hadn't taken care of the pile that was to be sold off. Luckily, all of the things he would keep for himself would fit in his personal Cosmos Sack without trouble.

Emily perked up the moment the shields surrounding the courtyard deactivated and rushed inside. Zac couldn't help but feel a bit amused when he saw her. For some reason, she had stylized herself as a barbaric warrior, with different wolf pelts as armor all around her. It was a pretty odd look considering how temperate the island was.

Her hair was braided backward like a Celtic warrior princess, perhaps to not get in the way during battle. She even had some paint markings on her face while the rest was covered in a veneer of dirt from days in the woods.

There were also clear indicators of her having been through harsh battles as she was bandaged in multiple spots, and Zac even noted a few scars with a frown. Still, the small wounds hadn't put a damper on the teenager as she ran over.

Unsurprisingly there were also two axes attached to a belt on her hip, meaning she had stuck to her decision to try to get a class related to the same weapon type as himself. But as she got closer Zac finally noticed one startling change. She looked younger.

Even before she had been pretty scrawny for her age, but now she almost looked like a kid. Zac couldn't put his finger on what exactly had changed, but she reminded him of when his sister was around twelve years old.

Zac's brows rose when he suddenly understood why she had changed in this peculiar manner. It must have been the Fruit of Ascension that made her look younger when she evolved. It was the same with himself when he evolved to the E-Grade race. He was already 30 but he looked like he was in his early twenties now.

Evolving seemed to remove markings of age due to things such as lifestyle and environment apart from slightly improving one's features. It just wasn't quite as pronounced with Emily due to her young age. But it still looked a bit comical to Zac, and he couldn't help snorting when he realized she might look like a brat for decades due to her improved longevity.

"It's your fault!" Emily snarled like an enraged wildcat, clearly having figured out the reason for Zac's amusement. "Your stupid fruit! Alyn told me I will look like a kid for like 20 years now."

"A lot of old ladies would give anything to be in your position," Kenzie said from the side with a smile. "Besides, you will be able to slightly change your appearance when you reach peak E-Grade according to Alyn."

"Looking young is a sign of great talent in the multi-verse," Calrin added. "It means you have quickly progressed on the path of Cultivation. Sometimes you would see great powerhouses looking like children. Those are the ones you need to be extra careful around."

Zac smiled and was about to respond as well when a blazing axe suddenly materialized in Emily's hand while she looked at them with wild eyes. It looked like a small tomahawk wrought out of scorching flames. The next moment she unhesitatingly threw it straight at Zac. Had the teenager finally snapped?

His eyes widened in alarm, but he didn't feel any danger so he didn't move. He didn't think that Emily would be able to harm him even if she wanted to. The flaming axe unerringly flew at him and to his surprise it entered his body without resistance.

The next moment he felt a flash of heat spreading through his whole body, but not in a bad way. It was like he had drunk a warm beverage on a cold day. He even felt a bit invigorated by it.

"Hehe surprised? Did I scare you?" Emily said with a wide smile. "That's what you get."

Zac snorted and shook his head. She had clearly been waiting for a while to use this thing on him, so he would let her have this one. Rather than arguing he instead looked inward to see the effect of the warmth spreading through his body. It was beneficial, and it slightly reminded him of the energy from [Hatchetman's Rage], without the detriments.

He quickly opened up his status screen, and he quickly realized he was right. His Strength and Dexterity had both increased by a whopping 5%, meaning he had gained 40 attribute points. Zac quickly looked up at Emily to see her whole form blaze with the same types of flames the axe was made from before subsiding.

"Wow! Your attributes are crazy, no wonder you're on the top of the ladder," Emily exclaimed.

"What is this skill?" Zac asked. "How long can you keep it up?"

Emily didn't immediately answer, and instead glared at the four Sky Gnomes who were still in the courtyard. Calrin rolled his eyes in response, but soon the four of them said their goodbyes leaving only Zac, Kenzie and Emily in the courtyard.

"It should boost you with 5% Strength and Dexterity, right?" Emily said, making Zac nod.

"I can keep it up for an hour right now, but I'm sure it will get longer as I level up. During that time I get the same amount of bonus attributes as you do. But even during normal times it gives me a 5% bonus. I also have an Earth Axe that gives Endurance and Vitality, and a mage axe," Emily proudly said. "But I can only use one at the time."

"You get the bonus as well?" Zac exclaimed with shock.

Five percent of his Strength and Dexterity was a pretty big boost for someone at her level, and her defensive axe would give even more attributes.

"Yeah, I get almost fifty bonus Attributes from this skill now. You will have to come with me when I hunt later! And you can't leave me on the island any longer. I can protect myself and even help out now," Emily eagerly said.

"Just what is your class?" Zac couldn't help asking.

"It's called Runic Shaman. I can buff one person at the time with my axes, and also fight with magically infused axes. It's the coolest class ever, and it's even Rare!" Emily said with pride.

Zac smiled and nodded. Clearly, the Fruit of Ascension had helped her get a great class, but the fruit alone wasn't enough. And he had to admit it would be great to keep her around while traveling. If she could boost him this much right now, how would it look when she gained higher mastery of the skills?

But she was still not very strong on her own, and he was afraid that she would be targeted if his enemies found out she could empower him. He remembered all too well how he himself had handled the Medhin warriors who used the war arrays. Emily noted Zac's hesitation, and a scowl started to appear on her face.

"You told me you would take me with you after I gained a class, and now I have!" she said with a glare. "You have already found your family, but I am still looking for mine!"

Zac sighed as he looked at the irate teenager. What she said was true. A big reason why she worked herself so hard was that she still hoped to find her two siblings. Zac knew that the likelihood of both of them still living was slim, even if they were both cultivators. But she had the right to look for them.

"How about this," Zac said after mulling it over. "I am going to Westfort tomorrow, the base of operations of the Marshall Clan. They have as good an information network as The New World Government. Why don't you come with me? Perhaps they have found the town where your siblings were dropped off"

"Great! I'll start packing," Emily exclaimed, her demeanor making a complete turn. "I'm going to go pack!"

The next moment she left the courtyard like a whirlwind before Zac had a chance to change his mind. He didn't even have time to ask about her level and titles. But Kenzie apparently knew what was on his mind and explained Emily's situation.

"She can protect herself against most warriors already, she's stronger than you think. She has pushed herself extremely hard since she gained her level. She even managed to kill a level 51 beast as her first kill," Kenzie explained.

"What?" Zac said, extremely surprised. "How the hell is that possible?"

He knew that the only reason that he was able to get the 'Slayer of Leviathans' title was that he lucked out on his roll against the Herald. For Emily to defeat such a powerful beast by herself was shocking. He remembered how he barely survived the fight against Vul, the Barghest Alpha. At that time he was almost level 20, and he had a slew of titles to empower him.

"She gained two very strong advantages before even turning 16. She both attained a Dao and upgraded her race. You know how good those titles you get from that. After that we found a very weak beast on Mystic Island," Kenzie explained.

"She formed a Dao Seed!?" Zac exclaimed before calming down. "But still."

"Between an offensive Dao and a high-quality weapon she almost killed the beast in one surprise strike," Kenzie continued. "After that, she slowly killed it with the help of a fireball skill she bought from the Nexus Crystal. The beast only managed to get in one blow, but she used her defensive gear."

Zac slowly nodded, realizing that Emily had quite a few advantages that he never had when fighting Vul. An offensive Dao added a huge spike in power, and it was such a Dao Seed that allowed him to kill an E-Grade beast in his Draugr-form. Using a Dao Seed to kill a level 50 beast made sense.

Still, he hadn't expected Emily to even attain a Dao seed before officially embarking on the path of cultivation. According to Ogras, it was practically unheard of on his own homeworld. With all those titles Emily might actually be stronger than the Valkyries by now.

Learning about Emily's situation was like a rock having been lifted off his shoulders. He truly felt he had made the right decision. His only regret was that she seemed to have gained a hybrid class that was part-support. Such a class would be invariably weaker in battle compared to a pure combat class.

"Has anyone else on the island managed to form a Dao Seed before turning 16?" Zac suddenly asked.

"Not that we know, but Alyn increased the amount of meditation for all children in the Academy after learning of Emily's situation. I think it's extremely rare, even with the help of Origin Dao," Kenzie said hesitantly. "But perhaps we can luck out and get another one."

Zac simply shrugged in response. He didn't hold too high hopes for that happening. Once was already a miracle without the help of a powerhouse showing the way. Besides, the Origin Dao would disperse and integrate with the world the following years, making the window of opportunity pretty brief.

"Speaking of meditation," Zac said as he started walking toward the teleporter on his compound. "Come with me for a bit."

"Wait, what about those things?" Kenzie said and pointed at the gardening golems idly standing in a corner of the courtyard.

Zac stopped with a start since he had completely forgotten about those things. When Kenzie and the gnomes had taken the golems out they were completely lifeless unlike when Zac snatched them from the Alchemist's mountain. No matter what kind of prodding they tried they were completely inert, so they simply placed them to the side before moving on.

After some hesitation, Zac put them into his private pouch. He did sort of want to leave them there to see whether they would wake up by themselves and start cleaning, but he was afraid they would freak out instead and start demolishing the whole place. He needed to be present in case that happened.

Soon the two stepped through the teleporter and appeared in Azh'Rodum. They quickly exited the town before they attracted any real attention and then entered the mines from a side-tunnel. Zac then quickly led his sister through the winding paths inside the mountain until they stood in front of the unassuming rock leading to his cultivation cavern.

"These mountains really are amazing," Kenzie said with a sigh when they stopped. "Jeeves says this place is probably among the top ten Zones on Earth for cultivation. After they have been doused in the Cosmic Energy for a few centuries they will become true Sacred Mountains."

"If you the mountains are good you'll like this," Zac said with a grin as he undid the arrays hiding the cavern before he moved the boulder out of the way.

Dense cosmic energy poured out of the cavern like a punch in the face, and Kenzie's eyes widened in shock as she took a deep breath. Zac indicated for her to go inside, and then placed the boulder back behind them to hide the entrance again. Next, he quickly activated the arrays again to prevent the energy from leaking out.

"This place... It's crazy!" Kenzie said as she looked around in wonder at the extremely dense flora growing in the cavern. "Even the mundane plants have gained spirituality from the enormous amount of energy. Did you make this place?"

However, Zac didn't answer as all his focus was on the pond with Cosmic Water. His heart quickly hammered with wild elation as he hurried over, only stopping right at the edge of the pond. His mouth curved upward as he looked at the sight.

A lotus no larger than his hand lazily bobbed on the surface.