

The Fall 653

Chapter 653: Mad Ambition

Zac had been completely convinced that it was Void's Disciple he tackled and pushed down from the Dimensional Seed. Who else would be able to withstand the intense fluctuations except for a Spatial Cultivator? But it turned out he was wrong. The aura of the one he tackled was identical to the one who had attacked him just now, and it wasn't Adcarkas.

The person standing in front of him with an expression rife with killing intent was still someone he knew though; it was Inevitability.

He hadn't seen the second Dominator since they met in the Eastern Trigram Hunt. The battle back then had been completely lopsided with Zac only escaping with his life because Thea used her ultimate escape skill. However, Zac had left for the Tower of Eternity and evolved into E-Grade since then. Zac had believed that he had not only caught up but far surpassed the murderous chain-wielding Zhix by now, but it was clear that Zac wasn't the only one who had made tremendous steps forward.

The aura Inevitability emitted gave Zac some palpitations, like he was once more standing in front of a blood-drenched level 100 warrior while still muddling along as a level 60 human. She had gained a lot of levels thanks to her killing points during the hunt, but that alone couldn't account for the enormous transformation of her aura.

The Inevitability of back then had first seemed like a curious child before she turned into a monstrosity full of unbridled bloodlust. But the Inevitability in front of him had already reined in her killing intent and now gazed at him with a calculating look, like a cold-hearted killer observing its prey.

Zac also didn't how was she almost unscathed after all those attacks. The only one who seemed to have managed to hit her was actually Ogras judging by the shadowy aura in a small wound on her left shoulder. That meant that she really had been there when the other attacks landed but it was like they never actually hit her.

The people Zac had brought here weren't fools who would hit empty air, and he had seen for himself them slam down on the unmoving body of the target. Zac glanced over to the spot Inevitability landed. As expected, the body had simply disappeared, and the Anointed had instead turned to Inevitability with solemn expressions.

Also, where the hell was Void's Disciple? Adcarkas was neither the one cultivating on top of the Dimensional Seed nor the one who attacked him. But surely he wouldn't stay back and let Inevitability fight all of them? Nothing was like how Zac had planned things out, and it made him hesitate.

"So, Karma has finally brought you here. I would have hoped that this building would delay you for another day. Well, searching for perfection is a fool's errand," Inevitability sighed as she looked Zac up and down. "The threads of fate surrounding you just keep growing. I have to say I am a bit jealous. But cultivation is ultimately a struggle against the Heavens. If fate does not choose you, then you simply need to subvert fate. That by itself might lead to greater things."

Zac's brows furrowed even further when he heard Inevitability speak, and the sense of wrongness just increased. This was definitely not how she spoke back then.

“Adcarkas!” Rhubat exclaimed with shock, making Zac look over with confusion. “How is this possible?! Why do you look like Kirath?!”

“Oh? I guess I can’t hide from your senses, Chainbreaker,” Inevitability snorted.

Or perhaps it was more apt to say Void’s Disciple. Zac finally understood what was going on, why the Inevitability of his memories was so different from the one in front of him. However, the realization only created more questions than answers.

“Possession,” Zac muttered, looking at the Zhix with disgust. “You said Inevitability was like a child to you when we met the first time, yet you steal her body?”

“Kirath wanted to contribute, to help me on my journey to the peak. What better way than to provide her body and to give me a chance to escape the chains of Karma?” Adcarkas smiled. “The fetters to my old body were too great, and it had long missed the prime window for building momentum strong enough to reach the peak.”

A wave of repulsion filled Zac’s heart as he looked at Void’s Disciple. His actions were so far into taboo territory that he would never be able to follow the normal path to power. Possessing one’s family, who’d do something like that? Anyone with even a sliver of conscience would get a mental demon from an action like that, and their cultivation road would immediately get fraught with danger and missteps.

Furthermore, possession was definitely was marred with problems. If it wasn’t, then old cultivators would just pick a new body and retrain from the start. Levels came easy, but insight did not. Imagine being a peak C-Grade cultivator stepping into the F-grade again? You would turn into a monster far greater than Zac ever was.

And what was that about chains of fate? Zac had until now operated under the assumption that Void’s Disciple was a devout follower of The Great Redeemer, but it didn’t sound like it from that expression.

“You’re not here to give your master this treasure?” Zac asked.

Void’s Disciple looked at Zac with a teasing smile, before he looked up at the sky.

“Not all is as it seems. Hm, I guess there’s no harm in telling you, the embryo will not be able to break out for over a day. This Dimensional Seed is a divine treasure for someone at the peak of the D-Grade. Incorporating it into your core can immediately open the road to monarchy. But why would I waste such a rare treasure on Vordis A’Heliophos when it is perfectly suited for me?”

“Is that why you killed Inevitability?” Zac asked as he circulated his energy while trying to come up with a plan.

There were too many variables at the moment. The aura of this merged Dominator was too weird, too powerful, making Zac a bit unsure he had what it took to succeed. Besides, he was clearly far more affected by the emanations of the Dimensional Seed than Adcarkas, and any second he could stall to regain his wits would increase his odds of victory.

“Kirath lives on through me. She will never die as long as I keep walking down my path,” Adcarkas smiled. “Luckily, part of our Master’s heritage was a Body Tempering Method to turn our bodies into

suitable vessels for possession. I guess Master desired a fallback in case his experiment failed. I simply made some adjustments to better suit my purposes.”

“This body was then reforged with the energy of the Seed, and my soul has already been suffused with the Dao of Space. It will allow a nigh-perfect fusion, and the next step is to infuse the Seed itself into my body. That will be my foundation for my Immortal Path. A Spatial Constitution with a Seed of Origin, a miracle that has never appeared in this sector,” Adcarkas smiled.

“Why are you telling all of us this?” Zac frowned.

“Isn’t it too sad? To have stumbled onto this earthshattering opportunity and survived the almost-certain demise of putting thoughts to action, yet have no one to tell of your exploits? The moment I step out into the cosmos I will have to hide my true power, but at least here I can speak freely,” Adcarkas laughed before his eyes locked onto Zac’s. “Now I just need to tie up a few loose ends. With the death of this world and your soul extracted, I will have closed this ancient chapter of Karma. The ties will be cut, and I’ll be free to pursue my truth.”

“Attack!” Zac roared, knowing his window to recuperate was up.

He was still a bit woozy, but there was not much he could do other than fight. It was unfortunately clear that Adcarkas had the home-field advantage as the Dimensional Seed suddenly flashed and thousands of Spatial Tears appeared all through the chamber. As for Adcarkas himself, he activated the skill that created a huge number of stars around him.

Zac immediately shot forward after making sure that his sister was safe. It looked like she could control the golden alloy like she could the Memorysteel, and it swam up around her to form a small dome. Billy and the remaining Anointed quickly grouped up in five small squads as they formed an encirclement led by Rhubat, and their auras rose as the air itself congealed.

Zac hadn’t seen this method used before, and he guessed it was something they had gotten their hands on to deal with Void’s Disciple’s spatial abilities. Of course, whether it would be able to prevent him from escaping was still up for debate. There wasn’t much else the Anointed could do against someone like Adcarkas though, but they could perhaps skew victory in their favor by stabilizing space itself in an arena.

And Zac saw that their plan wasn’t completely without merit as not a single one of the endless spatial tears had opened up within a hundred-meter radius.

The alloy floor gave off creaks of pain as Zac pushed [Loamwalker] to the limits, as he moved between the stars like a ghost. A few of them exploded just as he passed, but reaching peak mastery in the skill had improved the speed even further, allowing Zac to push through the minefield with only minor wounds.

He was suddenly in melee range of the target, and [Verun’s Bite] keened in the air as Zac tried to strike the Dominator with a series of probing attacks. The Dominator’s confidence was a bit disconcerting, and Zac felt something was up. After all, he had barely escaped with his life last time, even getting himself cut in two. Yet now he felt confident enough to start monologuing like a TV villain, something was definitely up.

Something like possession should also cause all kinds of trouble, like lacking compatibility between soul and body. Perhaps even rejection like a transplant. Yet he was leisurely talking like he had everything under control. It might be bluster, but Zac didn't want to burn his aces from the get-go before getting a better understanding of the situation.

The only one who had managed to harm Adcarkas until now was Ogras, and Zac figured it was thanks to the demon's shadow-related Dao Fragment. That might be the key to killing him, so each of Zac's swings was imbued with the Fragment of the Coffin, giving them a hint of putrefaction and extra force. His Fragment of the Axe was even stronger, but Zac wanted to hold off on it a while longer since Adcarkas still shouldn't know he had evolved it, and that might create an opening sooner or later.

The Anointed weren't actually attacking, only focusing on restraining the space around him, which no doubt was a herculean task considering the Dimensional Seed radiated immense energies right above their heads. Their life force was rapidly being expended to just weaken Adcarkas' advantage.

Ogras wasn't as limited considering his versatile combat style, and shadow spears kept appearing to strike at the Zhix as well. Even the stars cast weak shadows, allowing the demon to turn the Dominator's skill against him. It was the same with Kenzie who had over a hundred Drones fly around to hopefully distract the target. Laser beams suddenly shot toward the Zhix without warning from unexpected angles as drones appeared from behind spatial tears or the pillars.

However, the shadow spears didn't manage to cause any real harm to the Dominator, and there was something odd happening with the laser strikes. Zac knew all-too-well Jeeve's calculation capabilities, and he knew that it shouldn't keep making mistakes. But it was like his sister kept getting unlucky as the slowly moving stars somehow managed to block the shots over and over without seemingly speeding up at all. The stars formed some sort of elusive pattern that protected the Zhix when it looked like there were a lot of openings.

Adcarkas didn't seem to be in a hurry to end the fight, and he happily started to exchange strikes with Zac, just like how the two fought back on Earth. The situation was extremely odd though as Zac felt himself under tremendous pressure. Zac was fighting tooth and nail, his swings almost creating a blur as he tried to make the Zhix slip up by keeping up a massive pressure. If he could somehow cause Adcarkas to lose his concentration Zac might be able to hit him with a surprise slam from [Nature's Punishment].

But Zac felt a growing sense of inability as he exchanged strike after strike. No matter what he tried or how much he pushed himself there was always a palm waiting. If anything it felt like Adcarkas moved slower compared to their last fight, yet he was even more impervious.

Zac soon understood what was going on; everything Adcarkas did was imbued with the Dao of Space. The suns moved following some hidden rules that created an absolute defense, and his own movements created a great effect with minimal effort thanks to his high command of the Dao.

It was an eye-opening experience to see someone fight so in tune with his path, and Zac would be in awe of Adcarkas if the man wasn't trying to extract his soul. This was exactly the state Zac needed to reach for himself. He had created his path based on his trinity of Daos, but he still didn't have much to show for it. Adcarkas had gone much further on this path and was already infusing it with every single movement he took.

Zac didn't understand the concepts that were the basis of Adcarkas' altered combat style, but the battle was still a huge revelation to him. It felt like a flood of inspiration washed over him as he fought, and Zac finally understood what his next step should be in improving how he fought. Unfortunately, Zac quickly realized that just as he was gaining a lot from the battle, so was Adcarkas.

The Dominator was actually using him as a whetstone to consolidate his gains.

It might be possible that he was getting used to his new body as well, but in either case it wasn't a good feeling to be disregarded to the point he was just considered a training tool rather than a deadly foe. It almost felt like Adcarkas believed he could end the battle at any moment if he wished to.

And just as Zac feared, things suddenly changed. Zac had attacked the Dominator's head with two of his chains, trying to force him to use his arms to block. And just as the Zhix lifted his hand to intercept Zac's axe flashed forward with enough speed to almost break space. Zac wanted to cut off one of the dominator's hands, but he would be content if he just managed to wound it.

Zac's eyes widened in surprise when the axe actually passed right through the wrist, but surprise turned to confusion when only a shallow wound appeared. His mind screamed of danger the next moment as the Zhix launched a lightning-quick counter-strike aimed straight at his head, forcing Zac to hurriedly block with two chains of [Love's Bond].

Fist and metal clashed with huge force, but the chains suddenly slipped straight through his arm the moment Zac tried to ensnare him.

"He's shifting his body in and out of space," Kenzie's voice echoed out from a drone. "Just like the werewolves turning into light, but instead using the Dao of Space."

"Oh?" Void's Disciple said as he looked at the golden alloy bubble with interest as he effortlessly kept blocking Zac's strikes. "So you're the sister, the genius? I am guessing you are the reason you all managed to interrupt my cultivation so quickly. Well, I did promise Kirath revenge for her brother. You could say this would be poetic justice."

Space started to crack the next moment as a rift opened up. It looked like the array the Anointed maintained was resisting its emergence, but Adcarkas was simply too powerful if he put his mind to it. A flame of fury ignited in Zac's heart when he realized what the Zhix was doing, and his aura veritably exploded as any thought of probing was thrown out of the window.

Adcarkas was crazy if he thought he could hurt Kenzie right in front of him.