

The Fall 656

Chapter 656: Ticking Clock

Zac looked at the encounter between his sister and the Administrator, grasping at a last hope that she had some way to deal with this mess. He had never felt so weak as he did right now. He hated the feeling of not only being the weaker party, but being so far behind that you had no say in your fate. The Administrator, the Collector, the Great Redeemer. All beings infinitely more powerful than himself.

Kenzie came through.

Zac didn't understand what happened next, but the Administrator instantly lost his structural integrity and turned into a pool of alloy that melded with the floor. As for Kenzie, she didn't escape unscathed as she fell on the ground, her aura instantly turned extremely unstable. Whatever she had done had hurt her soul. Badly.

"Is it dead?" Zac asked after he flashed over as threw his best soul-healing pill into his sister's mouth.

"No way," Kenzie said with a weak voice. "Jeeves only knocked him out, kind of like I did with the bots. It will not last long though. We have a few minutes."

A pillar attached to the ceiling suddenly broke off and fell on another two, causing a huge shockwave as unbridled Origin Dao spread kicked up a storm. It came out of nowhere since that particular pillar was far away from any of the fighting. Had the Administrator controlled the containment field by itself until now?

Over a hundred more pillars collapsed a second later, and the Dimensional Seed once more woke up with unprecedented fervor.

"Uh, perhaps even less," Kenzie sheepishly said, confirming Zac's fears.

The situation was quickly deteriorating from there, and in more ways than one. One pillar after another collapsed, and with them the fetters on the Dimensional Seed. The spatial fluctuations were quickly approaching dangerous levels, and the Seed was clearly struggling to break through the final barriers.

If Zac almost felt like he was caught inside the containment field again, and Kenzie's state was even worse. But the one who was the most impacted by the change was Void's Disciple. He was broken and half-dying, but his aura was simply terrifying. His face had turned into a mad visage as he cackled while absorbing more and more spatial energies.

This was their only chance. Zac stomped down and appeared right in front of the madly laughing Adcarkas. He looked up at Zac with a sneer, but he didn't get the chance to attack before Zac crushed a small crystal hidden in his hand behind his shield. Adcarkas reacted quickly and tried to teleport away, but the effect was instant.

There wasn't even a ripple then the crystal broke, but the Dominator screamed as he clutched his head like he was going mad. A spatial storm immediately erupted around him and hundreds of spatial tears shot out in every direction. It was like his body was being drained of spatial energy, much to the detriment of the surroundings.

Zac quickly summoned [Immutable Bulwark], barely avoiding getting cut into pieces. Zac looked on with horror as another hundred pillars were destroyed in an instant, which only sped up the collapse of the whole building. He couldn't let this go on, so he quickly stomped down on the ground, finally activating [Profane Seal] to enclose the mad Dominator.

This was the first time Zac had activated the skill since it reached Peak Mastery, and the difference was clear. A proper wall had finally been added to the towers and the gates, and the skill now essentially formed a proper fortress to trap anyone inside. The defensive properties had clearly been increased to a whole new level, which was exactly what Zac currently needed as it blocked out an endless number of errant spatial tears.

For the first time, there were no new chains added when the skill upgraded, but the ones that were already there had been empowered. They now looked a lot more corporeal compared to before, like they wouldn't instantly melt when put close to flames or other powerful forces.

This was probably the last opportunity Zac would get, and he felt that the poisonous compound in his body was already starting to break down his muscles. It still gave him an empowering effect, but it would soon turn into a weakened state. With the compound downsides of [Hatchetman's Rage] and the [Rageroot Oak Seed], he honestly wasn't sure he would be able to avoid getting crippled, let alone able to keep fighting.

Clouds of miasma and putrefying gases spread out through the cage as he activated [Winds of Decay] and [Fields of Despair], and he pushed the taunting effect of [Vanguard of Undeath] to the max as a hundred skeletons appeared in an instant thanks to [Force of the Void]. One skeleton after another disintegrated as Zac transferred the damage from getting hit by spatial tear after spatial tear as he pushed through the storm surrounding the dominator, and they had all fallen even before Zac had managed to push through the chaos.

The defensive skill was destroyed in an instant, and [Profane Seal] crumbled a few seconds later, but it had allowed him to get close to the delirious Void's Disciple without exacerbating his wounds even further. Unfortunately, the Dominator's body was exhibiting some extremely weird symptoms. It was in constant flux since the spatial energy inside his body was going out of control.

Zac wasn't even sure decapitating the Dominator was possible in his current ghostlike state, and just as expected, his Fragment of the Axe-imbued bardiche passed straight through him without causing any damage at all. Zac scrambled for ideas, and he suddenly thought of something.

A mottled sword appeared in his hand, and Zac immediately stabbed it into the Adcarkas' forehead. Zac figured that if the sword was made by extracting the soul of a high-grade cultivator, it might contain some of his high-grade Dao as well. His own High-tiered Dao Fragment had obviously not been enough to harm the man in his current state, and it was either this or using his Remnants.

This time there was an effect, but Zac frowned as he was forced back by a shockwave, and he looked on with alarm as hundreds of the sinister veins sprung out from the weapon, trying to latch onto anything they could. A few shot straight for Zac who barely avoided them, but most targeted Adcarkas' body. It was like the sword was trying to fuse with the Dominator.

Adcarkas actually wasn't dead even after getting a sword pierced into his forehead, and Zac had finally run out of steam. He really regretted using the Cursed Sword instead of his remnants, but he had simply been too afraid to activate them in his current state. If Adcarkas somehow merged with the demonic sword, all might be lost.

He ate a Soldier Pill to mitigate his exhaustion, but the weird aura was extremely dangerous. Zac hesitated for a second before he took out a second spike from his spatial ring. Was this the time to worry about the future?

"Warmaster, let me," a rumbling voice said, and Zac turned back to see a shocking sight.

It was Rhubat, his burning life force making him look like a god of war, and the spear in his hand made its name justice. Behind him stood the twenty-two still-living Anointed, each of them with a seal shining above their heads as their life force created bonfires that incinerated Zac's putrefying mists.

"I am the Chainbreaker, I will end this Crusade," he said as his aura rose even further.

The twenty-two seals gained an almost blinding radiance the next moment, but they didn't shoot toward Adcarkas. Instead, they shrunk as they entered Rhubat's body one after another. Each seal imbued Rhubat with unimaginable power, but Zac soon understood the price of this skill as one Anointed after another collapsed, their bodies shrunken husks.

They were dead without a doubt, not a morsel of life force remaining in their bodies. They had sacrificed everything they had left for the crusade.

Rhubat's eyes became glowing orbs divine retribution, but cracks rapidly spread across his body since he was clearly unable to withstand the enormous force. He looked like a statue on the verge of crumbling, but there was no expression of pain or word of complaint as he started running toward Void's Disciple, his aura alone keeping the Spatial Tears at bay.

Adcarkas was on his last legs in his struggle against his mental demons and the cursed sword, but it was like he regained a hint of clarity the moment Rhubat approached. He unleashed yet another sphere of condensed space with a defiant roar, his face covered with wiggling veins. However, Rhubat punched down on the ball with a roar, crushing space itself at the price of mauling their thick fingers.

There was no time for the Dominator to launch another strike or attack, for [Judgement], the spear containing the ultimate will of the Zhix, stabbed forward. It was like it locked space itself, or perhaps it was rather locking fate as Adcarkas looked at the incoming spear with fury and irreconciliation but was unable to move.

The spear pierced his chest, and Zac saw that the wound was real as blood poured down in rivers. Adcarkas' heart was destroyed, and not even Zac could survive something like that.

"I cannot fall here! All I've sacrificed!" Adcarkas roared in anger as blood streamed down his mouth, his eyes wild with madness.

But [Judgement] didn't care about its enemies' thoughts, and it emitted an intractable force that caused Adcarkas' torso to darken before it started turning into dust. It was like he was being eroded from within, and Zac looked on with relief. He couldn't believe the state the Dominator pushed them to, forcing them to take out almost everything in their repertoire. He was finally dead.

However, space suddenly exploded, throwing a dying Rhubat away, and Adcarkas was swallowed by a spatial ripple. He didn't even try to flee though, but instead appeared next to the barely coherent Kenzie.

"NO!" Zac roared, as he tried to get back on his feet.

He still didn't have a movement skill in his current class though, and he could only watch on in horror as Adcarkas punched Kenzie in a final act of malice and defiance. A series of technocrat shields sprung up to defend her, but they immediately cracked. A defensive talisman around her cracked next, and a thin film appeared around her body.

It was one of the peak talismans Zac had collected in the Tower of Eternity, and it was thankfully powerful enough to block a strike of a dying Dominator. Still, Kenzie was launched in the air from the force as she puked out a huge amount of blood. She was still alive though, but Zac's heart was gripped in despair since he understood Adcarkas' true plan.

The force of the punch was more than enough to launch her clean across the room, and she was flying straight toward the unleashed Dimensional Seed that had started forming some terrifying vortex in the air.

Zac shot his chains toward her, but she was too far away and she moved too quickly.

But just as Zac was about to give up all hope a puff of shadows appeared right behind Kenzie, and Zac looked on with a surge of hope as the demon absorbed her momentum and pushed her down toward the ground again. But Ogras couldn't so easily dispel the momentum, and the demon found himself flung toward the berserking Dimensional Seed instead.

He tried to teleport away, but his movement skill was interrupted before it ended, like the vortex over the Dimensional Seed prevented anyone from leaving.

"Ogras!" Zac shouted, and the demon looked over in Zac's direction as he was kept in suspended animation.

Ogras' eyes locked with Zac's, and the demon only smiled wryly before he was turned into a stream of light that was sucked into the vortex.

Zac looked up at the Dimensional Seed with a mix of horror and shock, his mind blanking for a moment. He couldn't believe that Ogras had sacrificed himself to save his sister, but he had seen it with his own eyes. He looked at the sky with a gaping expression and was only dragged out from the brain fog as a huge, terrifying, surge of cosmic energy entered his body. Energy from Adcarkas finally dying.

The burst woke him up, and he knew that this wasn't the time to mourn his fallen friend. For one this place was falling apart, and secondly, the Administrator could reappear at any moment. Kenzie was knocked out clean, and even if she wasn't, she probably wouldn't be able to do anything if the AI came back. That meant they needed to be long gone from this place before it returned.

Zac scrambled for ideas, but he could only come up with one solution. Zac sent a command to his Specialty Core, and he was back in his human form a moment later. Some of the immense amounts of kill energy went into [Surging Vitality] as Zac shuffled over to the unmoving form of Adcarkas, and he threw out another body next to him.

It was Harbinger, or rather the pieces left of him after getting hit by the Annihilation sphere. Zac placed his two enemies next to each other before he poured a compound over their bodies. It was the Karma-breaking Treasure of Erasure he got from Catheya that he had saved for this very moment.

A wave of relief hit him as the quest finally completed, confirming that Earth was finally safe. Zac still didn't stop there as he also completely disintegrated the bodies with corpse-destroying powder. Adcarkas would no doubt have turned into an insanely powerful Revenant if Zac managed to turn him, but he definitely wouldn't risk bringing his body back to Earth.

Finally, just scattered dust was left of the man who had put terror into a whole planet for so long. Even a supremely talented genius who had grasped the Dao of Space had fallen before coming into power. It was a poignant reminder to Zac of how weak he actually was. But for now, he needed to find a way out of here.

His healing skill had patched up the worst of his wound, and he arduously gathered some energy as he shot forward. He was the last man standing in this collapsing containment field, but that didn't mean there were no targets. He roared to stimulate his exhausted body as he swung [Verun's Bite] in a mighty arc, and a Dao Pillar was cut clean off.

This was the plan. The place was collapsing, but not fast enough. Void's Disciple had said that they were destroying this hidden realm when they toppled a few pillars before, and Zac wanted to accelerate that process. Escaping from this building wouldn't help if the whole dimension would collapse in a few minutes anyway, but perhaps they'd be sent back to the mountain before the Administrator woke up if he freed the Dimensional Seed.

It was a risky gamble, but he was out of options. He had checked his Quest Screen already for clues from the System, but it was empty. He actually still hadn't received the final quest, so he could only scramble for a solution himself.

He was like a rabid beast lashing out at everything around him, with both chains and axe causing widespread carnage. He was once again a hatchetman, and the Dao Pillars formed the forest. In just half a minute he had destroyed over three hundred pillars. It would never have been possible if the Administrator wasn't knocked out, but the pillars weren't actively controlled any longer. They didn't even have any Base Power running through them to strengthen the materials, which was why so many of them crumbled on their own before.

Finally, the containment shield disappeared, and it looked like a soap bubble that just popped. The Dimensional Seed was free, and its reaction was instantaneous. A massive pulse spread out, and Zac only had time to grab his sister with his chains before the world turned black quickly followed by a blinding white.

Zac once more found himself beset by the ravages of the high-graded concepts the treasure radiated, and he could only hold on and pray it didn't last for long. Thankfully the effect was just a short burst this time around, and a wave of relief hit him when he found himself standing on a massive slab of Memorysteel, his unconscious sister lying just ten meters away from him.

He definitely hadn't been sent to the Memorysteel Mountain though, as he saw enormous fragments of Memorysteel, some of them tens of kilometers long, slowly swirl about in weightlessness around him.

Some crashed into each other which released shockwaves that Zac could feel all the way to his bones, while others simply drifted away into the darkness.

He realized that they had actually been sent out to the heart of the Memorysteel Sphere, and it had exploded from the looks of it. More importantly, a glimmering anomaly half a meter across hovered a few hundred meters away, beneath it a five-meter pedestal that seemed to be made from pure [Realm Locus]. Zac's eyes lit up with greed, but he couldn't help but hesitate.

Was this the Dimensional Seed or something else? Its energy signature was pretty weak at the moment, but it was still only barely within what he could handle. Furthermore, it was also was rapidly gaining power. The anomaly quickly started pulsating like the Dimensional Seed back in the hidden realm, and with each beat, it increased in intensity.

Just Reward (Training (9/9)): Brand the Dimensional Seed with your Mark of Creation, making it forever yours. Reward: Reward based on performance at the end of training regimen. (0/1) [00:00:32]