

## The Fall 232

### Chapter 232: Into the Fire

Thea noticed Zac's hesitation and stopped as well.

"What's going on?" she asked with vigilance while her eyes flashed with shimmering light, indicating she was using her observation skills. "I can't sense anything wrong."

"My danger-sense is acting up," Zac admitted as he took active control of his mental defense skill.

"Danger-sense, a skill?" Thea asked skeptically.

"Not really, just high Luck," Zac admitted.

"The more I learn about your situation the more pissed off I get," Thea muttered under her breath.

"You and Ogras could start a club about it," Zac snorted, though not relaxing his vigilance as he looked around.

"Is it the mountain?" she asked.

"I'm not sure," Zac said, his frown only deepening.

It was an extremely disconcerting feeling to have his danger sense constantly warn him about something that he couldn't pinpoint, and it felt like doom was constantly hanging over him. After a brief discussion, they decided to change the mountain. But the feeling didn't disappear for over two hours, making him almost believe his sense was on the fritz.

But the feeling suddenly intensified by a large degree, and he whirled around without hesitation, his axe ready. Facing them just ten meters away was a small unassuming Zhix warrior releasing no aura at all, to the point that it might as well be a level 1 mortal. The moment Zac saw the insectoid he immediately took out his dagger, but he soon gave up the idea when he saw the ladder position of the insectoid in front of them.

"Inevitability," Zac said with a stoic face, though his heart started beating like a drum.

It truly was the first place holder on the Hunter-ladder and one of the beings that stood at the peak of their world. Their plans and objectives were a mystery, and the fact that he had somehow appeared right in front of them couldn't spell anything but trouble.

"That's me," the Zhix said, a small smile on its face. "I have looked forward to meeting the Super-Brother Man."

"I thought you'd be an Anointed," Zac said, trying to buy some time while he figured out what to do.

"Don't compare us to those poor miscreations. Do you know what the Anointed are? It's forced mutation through Alchemy. They call it the Rite of Anointment, but they only stuff themselves full of natural treasures, hoping the surge of energy won't explode them," the Zhix scoffed.

Zac didn't relax just because the Zhix seemed happy to talk, but rather the opposite. It looked like Inevitability felt everything was in his control, even after knowing who he was. His hand stayed close to his pouch, ready to take out his token at moment's notice.

He finally understood how the cultivators had felt when they were trapped by Zac and Thea. The Zhix in front of him didn't emit any aura, but Zac knew that it was above his own level by a large margin. The insectoid seemed content to speak at the moment, but Zac couldn't figure out his real goal.

He now understood that the sense of danger came from Inevitability stalking them, and it was a proof of its ability that it could follow them for hours without them finding the slightest clue of its presence. He could only pray that it was due to Inevitability possessing some class with stealth-capabilities, rather than it simply being so far above them in power that it could easily hide from their senses.

"They invented it to combat us back in the day, you know?" Inevitability continued. "The unenlightened needed quick boosts in power to combat our superior strength during the Great War. But that path to power has a price, they will never ascend to the E-Grade. Soon they will be irrelevant, left behind as symbols of a misguided struggle."

"So what is your goal? Our new world is getting ravaged from foreign invaders, but I've yet heard of you closing any incursions," Zac probed.

"That battle is not for us, but we are rooting for your victory," the Zhix said with a teasing smile.

"Why?" Zac asked skeptically.

"Void chose you as a fulcrum, but I remain unconvinced, so I searched you out while that bore is busy. Why should I hold myself back if you can't even fulfill your designated fate?" the Zhix muttered.

"A fulcrum?" Zac asked with a frown. It wasn't a great feeling to be part of some scheme of Void's Disciple, the strongest being on the planet.

Unfortunately, the Zhix didn't seem interested in divulging any more intelligence. The next moment a terrifying aura was unleashed from the seemingly unassuming Zhix, and Zac couldn't help but take a step back in shock.

Zac had recently made huge improvements to his combat power with his second Class and new round of titles. That had made him feel almost invincible on earth. He had thought that even if he wasn't an even match against the Dominators he would at least be able to put up a decent fight. Perhaps he would even be able to kill them if needed with a surprising burst of power through [Hatchetman's Rage].

However, only now did he truly understand the folly of his inflated ego. The aura that was being emitted was just monstrous, and not something that would come from some random cultivator. Inevitability clearly had his own sets of lucky encounters to power him as well, and with this high level, the result felt almost impossible to overcome.

Of course, the aura was nothing compared to what he sensed from his meeting with Greatest or the imprint of the Great Redeemer. But their auras felt so far beyond his own that making an accurate measure of their strength was impossible.

Inevitability's aura was within his scope of understanding, but it was far beyond what he could unleash by himself. Furthermore, it was powered by an immense killing intent that could only come from killing hundreds of thousands of beings.

The Zhix warrior barely reached Zac's chin, but it felt like Zac was staring at an enormous beast when he was inundated in Inevitability's aura. He quickly released his own to combat the oppressive feeling, getting ready for battle. It was clear that the Dominator had come for a fight after all.

Zac didn't dare to hold anything back, and Thea was clearly of the same opinion. But their goal wasn't to defeat the Zhix.

"Flee," Zac only said through grit teeth as before he disappeared, appearing over a hundred meters away the next moment with an attack ready.

He sent five huge edges empowered by the Dao of Heaviness toward Inevitability, hoping to push him back.

"Not bad," the Zhix said, a smile still adorning his face.

The huge edges ripped through the air with enormous power, destroying trees and boulders as they flew straight toward Inevitability. The Zhix lifted his hand, and two odd chains emerged from his back and almost floated in the air in front of him.

It was truly odd, as one moment Zac thought he saw two silver snakes floating in the air, but the next moment they were chains again. They kept swapping back and forth making it impossible to understand which was their true state. When Zac's attacks closed in the two chains formed a circle, and a huge fractal suddenly appeared in the middle of them, shining with a silver luster.

The fractal edges slammed into the erected defense one by one with enough force to decimate a city block, but it was to no avail as the fractal didn't even budge from the onslaught. The next moment tens of daggers descended from the skies, each glistening with a cold sharpness.

It was the work of Thea, and another attack Zac hadn't seen her use before. He could also sense that the falling daggers were imbued with something similar to his Dao of Sharpness, perhaps the Dao of Penetration.

The knives whistled as they ripped through the air, falling down at Inevitability with the force of small meteors. But the Dominator suddenly disappeared and reappeared outside the attack range of the daggers who rained death unto an empty patch of grass.

The next moment the two silver chains shot out from Inevitability, and they both flew toward Zac and Thea like bloodhounds having gained the scent of their prey. The power contained in the chains was terrifying, and neither wanted to clash with the weird things head-on.

Since the moment Zac launched his attacks he also utilized their movement skills to the maximum, desperately running away from the battle. But the chains were closing in on them, and Zac started to feel intense mental pressure as they approached. It felt like the chains emitted some sort of binding power, and moving was getting harder the closer they got.

He could only take active control of [Mental Fortress] to protect himself from whatever effect the fractals were bringing, and he summoned two more fractal edges with [Chop] as he ran. When he saw that the stretch ahead was clear he jumped up in the air and launched the two strikes at the incoming chains before he landed again.

The maneuver didn't cost him any speed, but even though he felt the shockwaves from his attacks hitting the pursuing attacks he sensed that they weren't destroyed. However, he did sense that the pressure lessened somewhat, so he kept at it as he fled.

They kept running for thirty minutes, constantly using their movement skills to try to shake off the chains. But it appeared they were able to grow impossibly long and kept with them as they fled. Both Zac and Thea were also forced to keep attacking them as they ran to keep them at bay.

At least it was somewhat effective, and they finally managed to destroy the two pursuing snake-chains just before reaching one of the cracks in the earth. It stretched over a hundred meters across, much too far for them to jump with their current power.

They were just about to run toward the north alongside the crack but suddenly they heard a crack from a twig snapping.

"I am impressed," the familiar voice said from just next to them, making Zac jump away by surprise. "The power was split between two chains, but the fact that F-Graded warriors managed to destroy them is very impressive."

Zac was breathing heavily from his desperate flight, but Inevitability stood just fifty meters away from them as though he had been there from the very beginning. Zac looked back at the large chasms that seemed to reach toward the core of the earth, a bottomless pit.

They had their backs toward the wall, and Zac knew it wasn't the time to hold anything back anymore. There was simply no way for them to escape from Inevitability, his speed was far above their own.

The only reason they were still alive seemed to be that he was only toying with them, but for what reason he couldn't fathom. But that didn't mean that he would let them go, and Zac prepared his last gambit.

The energy in the surroundings started to enter him with torrential force as he activated [Hatchetman's Rage] as his forearm was being flooded with Cosmic Energy. Thea was doing the same, and the air around her left arm shimmered with extremely condensed power.

"Your final cards?" the Zhix said as it curiously looked at them with an excited grin.

The next moment an enormous hand once again emerged from the crack in space above him. The hand hadn't grown larger from the upgrade, but it emitted a force condensed enough that it could rival the Dominator's aura. It almost looked like it was tattooed with a dense print of fractals as well, creating clearly demarcated rings on the fingers.

The Zhix frowned when he saw the incoming hand, and tens of chains emerged from behind him, combining into a huge snake that moved to intercept [Nature's Punishment]. But the rings on the fingers of the hand suddenly lit up with green luster, and the silver snake was briefly unable to move.

Zac was surprised by the added effect of his attack, but he wouldn't let it go to waste as he used all power he could bring to bear to slam the hand down on Inevitability. The insectoid roared in anger, and the air around it started twisting from the power it emitted.

The hand slammed into the ground with enough force that cracks were starting to form for over a hundred meters, making Zac worried that the whole stretch of land they stood on would fall into the chasm behind them.

But Zac didn't have time to think about that as intense pain consumed him as the enormous wooden hand was ripped in two, and a bloodied Inevitability emerged. He wasn't unscathed from the attack though, with his right arm limply hanging at an odd angle, and blood was dripping from his mouth from internal injuries.

"Void Piercer," Thea muttered with a low voice, and the next moment it was as though a tube of the void itself stretched toward the Zhix with lightning speed.

Unfortunately, it looked like Tha had trouble controlling the skill, and she faltered almost as soon as she unleashed the attack, making it hit slightly off-mark. The spear wrought out of grey energies hit the dominator in its gut, but there was no shockwave or huge explosion.

But a perfect hole appeared in the body of the Zhix, and the hole also kept going for another twenty meters, cutting straight through a boulder and a couple of trees. It was like she had used a supremely powerful railgun that disintegrated everything in its path, and Zac could only sigh in regret that it hadn't hit a more lethal spot.

Inevitability coughed he held his broken arm, blood streaming down from its wounded side. But Zac was disappointed to see that the Zhix was still in fighting condition, and the wound was closing itself with speed discernible to the naked eye.

Even worse, the lackadaisical manner of the Dominator was gone, replaced with burning fury.