

## The Fall 287

### Chapter 287: Subterfuge

Zac didn't stop running even if the wall was quickly filling up with somber-looking warriors, all of them looking ready to fight. However, a huge fireball ripped toward him, forcing him to a screeching halt as it slammed down in front of him, causing a large scorch mark.

"Help! I wish to join your great sect, but these crazy women want to stop me," Zac shouted as he stood right between the Profound Yin cultivators and the wall.

The cultivators from the Profound Yin Sect had also stopped their pursuit by now, but they seemed unwilling to let things go as they were. They seemed more than ready for a fight even though quite a few of them were pretty spent from the ultra marathon. But the disciples still in F-Grade all ate some pill that seemed to perk them right up.

"Hand this man over to us and we will not take this issue further," one of the elders said with a somber face.

There was only silence for a few seconds until the large gates suddenly rumbled as they opened, and a small group of cultivators walked out. They seemed to be roughly the same number as his pursuers, and Zac started to wonder if there were some unspoken rules between the two sects.

Perhaps they kept their clashes to a certain number to avoid too large losses. With their accumulated enmity it wouldn't be surprising if they would launch an all-out war, but it would at best result in a pyrrhic victory. These two sects weren't the only forces in the area, and such an action would surely lead to the downfall of both sects.

"You will not take things further, you say?" a robust man with bulging muscles said with a teasing face. "I wonder what a couple of birds so far from home would do if we don't comply."

"Romi, are you truly planning on testing our patience in the middle of winter? We are taking this man back either alive or in pieces. He grievously wounded Gemoa. A price must be paid," another of the Yin elders growled.

"It might be winter, but in this area the Yin is always suppressed," the man called Romi scoffed before he turned to Zac. "Young man, you managed to hurt that bitch? Very impressive. Too bad you look a little girly."

Zac quickly tried to find a good course of action, and his face started to change. It was no longer the slightly feminine youngster with long hair standing in front of them, but rather a man in his 40s with a masculine face.

Zac tied up his hair as he forcibly stopped his face from grimacing from the pain from changing appearance. He had decided to utilize [Thousand Faces] once more to become less threatening to the Everlasting Yang Sect. A middle-aged man defeating an elder was much more believable compared to a youngster. Perhaps they would think he was part of some other force otherwise.

"I managed to ambush her, but she was unfortunately too strong so I couldn't kill her," Zac said with a gravelly voice. "I changed my face to sneak inside and get this."

The next moment he held up the box, and he quickly opened it to show the orchid. He held the box so that both parties would see the orchid within, and their expressions proved he was on the right track.

"I wanted to present this to your great sect as proof of my sincerity," Zac said as he threw a scathing glance at the profound yin elders. "Who would have known that these bitches couldn't get enough of my handsome face and chased me for three straight days?"

The members of the Everlasting Yang Sect only gaped at Zac in surprise, whereas the Profound Yin sect members looked like they would explode in anger. Another of the Yang elders quickly noticed an opportunity to further piss off their enemies, and he looked over at the women with a sneer.

"A profound yin orchid! A fine offering indeed. It's useless for us, but perhaps we could plant them and feed them to our cattle," he laughed.

That comment was the last spark needed to start a conflagration, and one of the female disciples screamed in anger as she launched a blade of ice right at the elder. However, he was somewhere in the middle of the E-Grade and with a laugh easily melted it, causing a mist to rise around him.

The two sects needed very little encouragement as the next moment over ten attacks sailed through the air between the two sides. One of the elders even turned her eyes toward Zac in rage, and a crystalline bird appeared out of nowhere as it flew toward him with a screech.

Zac screamed in alarm, only half-faking it, and ran toward the members of the Everlasting Yang sect. But the bird was extraordinarily fast and its beak pierced him in his back. Zac fell over and spat out a mouthful of blood that immediately froze into sanguine crystals.

"Protect that man!" Romi shouted as a lance of fire erupted from his hand, shooting straight toward the elder who attacked Zac from the other side.

Zac's pathetic state wasn't fully a ruse, as the peck from the bird had contained a massive amount of frigid energies that rampaged through his body. He desperately circled his Cosmic Energy along with the Dao of Trees to slowly grind away at it, but doing so left him almost unable to move.

Luckily two disciples quickly ran over and lifted him up, and one of them even infused him with some fiery energy that helped combat the cold. However, the second one did not seem to be as benevolent, and Zac noticed a pair of greedy eyes looking at his Cosmos Sack.

"What are you doing? Get him inside the gate!" Romi shouted as two more molten streams erupted from his hands to intercept the disciples who tried to approach Zac.

Seeing that Zac was being taken away caused the brawl to turn into an all-out conflict, and soon the whole area had turned into a haze from the mix of water vapors and smoke from fires. Constant explosions and screams could be heard though, and Zac couldn't help but shake his head in bafflement. They had been all too ready to go to war with each other.

Zac heavily hung on the disciple's arm as he pretended to be extremely weakened by the strike. In reality, his eyes were scanning the rampart in front of him, until he finally found who he was looking for. A man in his late twenties or early thirties stood on top of the wall not too far from the gate, sporting a large sword fashioned from reddish stone on his back.

This was the core disciple that Yrial had fought in the real world, and Zac's theatrics was a bid to get closer to him. There was no way that he dared to infiltrate this sect as well with the commotion that he had caused, so he needed to take one of the rubies that had already been harvested.

The core disciple had taken the ruby out of his Cosmos Sack when taunted by Yrial in his memories, and he hadn't needed to get it from anywhere. Since he was at peak F-Grade he was likely preparing to use it and then evolve to E-Grade, though Yrial threw a wrench in those plans.

"Just sit down and rest," the man who helped him combat the frigid energies in his body said to Zac after they entered the sect. "The yin-energies can leave hidden wounds if not properly dispelled."

"Thank you. I'll focus on recuperation," Zac simply said as he sat down and closed his eyes.

The battle was still raging outside, and the two disciples who had helped him back to the sect hurried back outside to join their brothers, and Zac was left largely alone. Almost all of the other sect members had their focus on the battle outside their walls, and it almost seemed like they were watching a play.

"Elder Romi's [Molten Burst] is powerful as ever, it's even able to melt a hole straight through the [Ice Bulwark] of Tylaena," one of them muttered from atop the rampart.

Zac shook his head in wonder. The disciples even knew their enemies by first-name basis, showing how often they clashed with each other. If they just put their differences aside they would have been able to create a great sect with complementing strength, just as Yrial's two attributes complemented each other.

But who knew if these sects even still existed in the real world. From what he had heard the average sect only lasted between 5 and 20 generations, which meant for an E-Grade sect 2 500 to 10 000 years. Between natural disasters, declining talents, and calamities thrown at them by the System there was no such thing as a permanent force.

Since millions of years had likely passed since Yrial's feat took place these two forces were most likely long gone and forgotten, their endless conflict not even mentioned in the ancient history books. Zac sighed with some melancholy as he opened his eyes and looked around. These projections all represented people with dreams and ambitions.

But Zac soon snapped out of it as he silently got to his feet. A few disciples looked over at him, but they didn't have time to do anything before Zac exploded into action. The ground beneath his feet cracked as he pounced right at the disciple who possessed the ruby he was after.

The core disciple barely had time to turn his head before Zac was upon him from behind. But the disciple was clearly a battle-hardened warrior, as his hand was immediately gripping the large rock-sword on his back. He quickly raised it slightly to protect his head from Zac's incoming fist.

But even though he was a core disciple of the Everlasting Yang Sect he was completely unable to endure the fist that was empowered with a high mastery Dao and almost 600 Strength. The sword slammed into the back of his head and he was thrown forward, landing in a heap outside the sect.

Zac didn't give him a chance to gather his wits before he followed. He jumped down from the wall walk and landed right on top of the poor man, imbued with the Dao of Heaviness. Large cracks in the ground spread beneath the disciple and his face turned green until he emptied his stomach.

Some of it splashed straight in Zac's face but he reined in his disgust as he ripped the disciple's Cosmos Sack from his side. He gave the puking man another stomp for good measure as he scoured the inside of the Sack for his target.

"Traitor!" a disciple screamed, and a few enraged disciples started to prepare attacks.

However, Zac's display of might made all of them hesitant to go first, allowing Zac to snatch the large red ruby before putting it away in his own sack. A quick glance confirmed his quest was (2/2).

But Zac's brows furrowed when he was still standing on top of the core disciple after a few seconds. Was something missing from the quest? However his danger sense started going off, and he unhesitantly moved away with [Loamwalker] a moment before Romi's [Molten Burst] ripped through the air where he stood.

"You have guts, thief!" Romi roared, completely enraged.

He was bleeding from his mouth and his right shoulder was frozen solid from ice, but his aura was still stable, meaning he hadn't been critically wounded.

"You try to play our sects while stealing our treasures?" he growled. "You can forget about leaving this area alive!"

The fighting had already subsided and the haze that covered the pitched battle between the two sects was quickly dissipating. Soon all the disciples and elders were in full view, and all of them sported various degrees of wounds. Some even lay unmoving on the ground, their fate unknown.

One thing that seemed to unite both camps was their seething hatred for Zac though, and they all looked at him with burning eyes.

"I'm happy to see you guys finally get along," Zac sighed before he immediately sped away with his movement skill.

Quite a few dangerous auras were waking up inside the sect as well, and Zac knew he couldn't stay any longer. He unhesitantly fled into the forests with members of both sects in tow. This time however the elders were quickly outpacing their disciples, and Zac was forced to go all out.

Luckily endurance was Zac's strong suit, and neither sect seemed to excel at speed. So Zac simply switched between [Loamwalker] and high speed running for 6 hours until he finally had lost the last of the elders.

It was one of the elders from the Profound Yin sect, and she screamed in frustration into the air when she finally gave up on the chase. Zac only shook his head with a wry smile as he kept running for another two hours. He found a secluded spot and sat down to wait out the clock.

When the quest timer hit zero the world blurred, and the next moment he found himself lying in a patch of flowers with a large moon shining down on him.

"You're back, as expected of my disciple. How about it, wasn't your master dashing back in the day?" Yrial's voice floated over from the pond.

Zac slowly got up to his feet, relieved to see that only 6 hours had passed since he got put under, meaning time passed 20 times faster inside the dreamscape.

“You’re something, alright,” Zac said with a shake of his head as he turned toward his new teacher. “I wonder how you escaped the pursuit of two rabid sects back then?”