

## The Fall 296

### Chapter 296: Division of Labor

Zac shook his head with a wry smile before put aside the information crystal. He would need to survive the Incursions, Dominators, and the Great Redeemer before he could worry about potential vendettas with various factions in the multiverse.

The next hours were spent with Zac going over any subject that he could think of. One small regret was that the Library was extremely old, and any information about forces would have to be taken with a grain of salt. For example, there was no mention of the Allbright Empire in the Library, though Zac didn't know if that was due to the Empire being too young or that the Library could only hold so much information.

But the most interesting crystal he found was a bibliography of a Mortal warrior who managed to reach peak C-Grade. It mostly centered on his exploits and experiences, but some snippets gave insights into the hurdles a Defier would encounter.

As Zac suspected the general method of Galvarion, the aquatic Mortal, to break through his nodes was to force them open. It took him almost a hundred years to reach the peak E-Grade, most of it spent on a sickbed from his wounds. It had taken him another 150 years to heal his foundations until he even dared to attempt to form his core.

As he read through the history of Galvarion Zac also started to understand Alyn's standpoint regarding Class Rarities better. Galvarion only possessed an Epic C-Grade Class, the lowest possible rarity if one wanted to progress further.

In fact, it had been the same from the start for the man. He started with a humble Warrior class at F-Grade and slowly upgraded the rarity once every Evolution. He wasn't supremely strong for his level, though better than most through a series of fortuitous encounters and good Dao insights.

But he was still looked down at by the elite forces in the area, and a few enmities had resulted in him almost dying multiple times over. But Galvarion always remembered the grudges as he slunk away, only returning when he had become stronger.

Soon after evolving to C-Grade he completely eradicated 6 D-Grade forces that had crossed him over the past thousands of years. That went to show that the rarity of a class wasn't nearly as important as the Grade.

The bonus attributes he got now from an Epic class wouldn't make much difference when Zac was a D-Grade powerhouse, and Zac started to wonder if he was doing the right thing from pushing toward the peak rarity. But Yrial never mentioned anything about the subject, so he decided to stick with his gut.

He would ask the Lord of Cycles the next time they met just in case, but he knew that the extra attributes were only a small part of what the better classes brought to the table. Instead, he kept going through various information crystals to get a better basic understanding of the multiverse and cultivation in general.

It was only around 5 pm that Alea spoke up.

"We have a meeting in 30 minutes," she said. "A council for the upcoming war."

Zac couldn't stop a groan from escaping his lips, and Thea looked less than enthused as well. Both of them had turned to people of action from their experiences following the integration, and these meetings had turned into torture. But there was nothing to be done about it. Some big decisions needed to be made, and Zac needed to be present for them. So they simply took a small walk in the garden before entering the conference room.

Zac sat down with the other people from Port Atwood, nodding at Calrin. He knew this meeting would be a real marathon, and he got flashbacks from the monthly meetings back at the office that never led anywhere. He had shortly spoken with Adran and Alea just before entering, and the negotiations so far hadn't been without its issues.

Zac would have thought that everything would be easy sailing since his side was negotiating from a side of absolute power, but the wily diplomats had a million ways to slightly gain small advantages for themselves if his side wasn't alert.

A glance across the table told him that Thea was as bored as himself, and she even looked ready to fall asleep. But a cough from Henry woke her right up as he convened the meeting.

"Welcome all. As you know the objective of today's meeting is to formalize the coming war effort. With the benefits garnered from the hunt, we will never be any more ready than now. We also know that the restrictions are rapidly weakening on the invading forces, and the amount of support they can bring through the Nexus Hubs will increase. Time is of the essence," Henry began, drawing nods from around the table.

"There is another reason for urgency," his closest aide continued as he turned on a large monitor. "The Undead Empire is on the move."

The screen showed aerial shots of massive hordes of undead walking through some fields. The numbers were on a completely different level compared to what Zac had encountered during his visit to the Dead Zone. The countless bodies turned the army into a sea, and it was impossible to make a correct estimation, but there were millions and millions as they stretched out toward the horizon.

Certainly, almost all of them were low-leveled Zombies, but they were still a huge threat. Even Zac would run out of steam long before he managed to grind down such a terrifying number of enemies. And others weren't like Zac with his 800 Endurance. The Zombies were extremely aggressive and one bit was all it took against most fighters. They didn't care if twenty of the Zombies were hacked to bits as long as one of them could wound a living person.

"What of the Monastery of Everlasting Peace?" Zac asked as he opened his Town Menu.

He breathed out in relief as he saw the teleporter to the Monastery still being active, hopefully meaning they were fine.

"For now they are only cordoned off, but we believe a siege will start in earnest sooner or later," the man said as he pushed the button on a remote to show a few more screenshots of the armies. "The main hordes extend outward in three directions as it stands, and we believe that all of them have great powerhouses in the lead."

"One of the hordes is moving toward the reorganized strongholds of China, Korea, and India. This force could be seen as an Ally of ours, though we haven't entered official negotiations," Henry elaborated. "They mostly started approaching us recently due to the movements of the undead. But another reason is that the New World Government has proven to be an extremely flaky ally for them. They have been promised assistance with the Incursion for months, but the Government has only made a symbolic show of effort."

"What about the other hordes?" Zac asked.

"One of them is heading toward the European Heartlands," the aide explained and opened up a map of the central region of Pangea "This horde would cause widespread damage to both the New World Government, a large number of Ishiate settlements, and many of our allies. Even Westfort would be implicated if they aren't stopped within a month or two."

"The final group is moving toward one of the Incursions," Henry finished. "That horde we'll leave alone. Let the aliens weaken each other. But the other two hordes must be dealt with."

"So what is the plan?" Thea asked from the side, looking at the map with a frown.

"The two hordes must be whittled down before we can assault the core of the Incursion," Henry said. "Otherwise we would run the risk of getting trapped inside. There are still tens of millions of Zombies guarding the core, so we believe there will be a protracted siege to break it down."

"This is where the visible part of our operation will take place," another aide explained. "Armies run by the Marshall Clan, Port Atwood, and our other allies will join forces to battle the enormous monster hordes that threaten native settlements. It will protect our interests, garner respect with the civilian populations, and provide our fighters with a source of Cosmic Energy. We only need a number of powerhouses to offset the danger that the more powerful undead pose."

Zac shook his head at the cynical explanation of why they would mobilize the forces.

"Do you not agree with the proposal, Lord Atwood?" the aide asked.

"We are fighting for the survival of our planet, do we really need other reasons to mobilize?" Zac sighed.

"The opinion of the population is very important even in our current world," Henry said, though the demons weren't convinced either.

Zac was also slightly unconvinced, but he motioned Henry to go on with the plan.

"We will use both old-world weaponry and Cosmic Energy to destroy these hordes. And if we can't completely destroy them, we will hopefully weaken them enough to stall their approach. The undead have officially been declared to be an enemy of earth, no matter their previous identities," Henry continued. "But in the end, this war is only a diversion."

Alea and Adran threw a glance at Zac who looked a bit confused at this point.

"An all-out war is a diversion?" Zac probed.

"We have to face reality. No matter how many of our ordinary warriors we throw into the midst of war these days, it doesn't matter," Henry said. "The fate of a nation rests on the shoulders of those at the apex."

Zac slowly nodded in agreement. Unless one could take out the leaders of a force it could always be rebuilt. If someone attacked Port Atwood he could simply retreat, and return with a vengeance whenever he was prepared. It was the same with the incursions.

"They want you to close the other incursions while they fight the zombies," Alea explained. "And they want it to be a secret operation, so no one will learn of your deeds."

Zac looked at Henry, who made no efforts to refute Alea's claim.

"That is correct. Our plan hinges on the monstrous power you have. You alone are more important than all our soldiers. There is no way for us to close any incursions without massive casualties. We would run out of manpower after just two or three of them. But you and a small support group would be able to go in, kill all the leaders, and then force the rest in retreat," Henry said.

"We would provide the logistics, and you would ideally go from incursion to incursion, destroying as many as possible before any news could spread between the Invaders. We have already set up outposts close to every single incursion by now," another Marshall Family member added.

"And guess who they want to lead the armies and win the adoration of the world?" Alea added with an acerbic tone as she turned her gaze at Thea, who frowned before looking over at her grandfather.

"Thea is the best candidate for the job," Henry said with equanimity. "One powerhouse is needed to make sure one of the Undead Empire Generals doesn't start a massacre. Your prowess is already needed with the incursion. Billy Trask Jr. is not suited for a leadership role due to his unique mental state. Enigma and Joker are suspected to be in the Underworld. Daoist Chosui and Guru Anaad Phakiwar are holding down the fort for the Sino-Indian Alliance. Silverfox is believed to be part of the New World Government. That leaves Thea."

Zac had to admit that what Henry Said made some sense, but that still only covered one of the two armies.

"The other two and I can lead the other army," Alea suddenly said. "The three of us are far deadlier together than Ms. Marshall is alone."

Zac immediately understood that Alea was referring to Janos and Ilvere, and he felt it wasn't a bad idea. Ilvere was a skilled commander, while Alea was just extremely effective against large groups of enemies.

"Does your and Janos' skillsets work against the Undead?" Zac asked to make sure.

"Janos can't do much against the brainless undead, but the leaders are the same as humans. I won't face any obstacles with either," Alea said.

The others curiously looked at the two, hoping for an explanation.

"That's fine with me," Zac said. "Three of my generals will lead one army while Thea leads the other. That way we can properly cover both the hordes."

"Will you not need them for the Incursions?" Henry asked. "We can also provide a few elite squads to provide backup."

"That won't be needed," Zac said with a shake of his head. "I have Ogras and my own elite soldiers for that."

Truthfully he wouldn't have minded some backup, but Zac was planning on using his undead form when possible to grind a few levels. He didn't want a bunch of people from other forces snooping at him and reporting back.

"You should bring Billy as well," Henry said after a brief pause. "Our investigation showed that almost all of the Incursions have set up strong defensive arrays. Billy is uniquely gifted at dealing with that."

Zac nodded in agreement. No one was as clear as himself just how powerful that strike was. Many of the details got hammered out over the following two hours, and Zac got an information package containing the gathered intelligence of the remaining Incursions. Some of them were completely unknown to Zac from before and placed in extremely remote regions of Pangea. The Marshall clan was truly thorough.

He was also happy he had some other negotiators by his side. Adran made sure that the area every single incursion that Port Atwood conquered would become part of their land, apart from the Undead Incursion. That place was too large to handle in any case, and it would perhaps take centuries for the Dead Zone to heal.

"What about the New World Government?" Zac suddenly asked. "Won't they assist us?"

"They are currently mobilizing their armies, but I would not count on them for the incursions," Henry said with disdain. "Their two top powerhouses aren't strong enough to take down even the weakest the incursions now that the restrictions have become so lax. Besides, I am not sure if they even want to."

"What do you mean?" Zac asked with some confusion.

"We have reason to believe that the New World Government, or at least a core group of its leaders, have allied with the so-called Dominators of the Zhix."