

The Fall 300

Chapter 300: Ready for War

A table was placed in the middle of Zac's courtyard, and six people were sitting around it. Apart from Ogras and his three generals, there were also Joana and Alyn. This was a war council, but Zac still wanted Alyn's input since no one had a better grasp of the strength of his armies than her.

"So, Alea should already have filled you all in on the general plan," Zac said as he turned toward Alyn. "Are the armies ready to be deployed?"

"Honestly? Barely," Alyn said with some annoyance on her face. "A lot of those people are too soft. War is exactly what's needed to get a few of those people in shape. And if they die we at least save on costs."

Zac frowned a bit at Alyn's callousness, but she was adamant.

"Months and months have passed and some have never even risked their lives. Many of those who joined the army were people who had huddled in fear within walls on the various islands, and they were thirsting for power. But now that they are faced with real risks many are balking, and we have even had to publicly execute a few people who tried to cause a disturbance," the schoolmistress continued.

"There is a good core of over eight thousand men and women though, they will all be able to put up a fight."

"What? Eight thousand?" Zac gaped.

"Only the elites are actually at the Academy by this point," Alyn said. "Many are on other islands defending our various facilities. "In total, our armies have already passed fifteen thousand men, though we need to leave at least twenty percent to protect our interests and maintain order."

Zac was surprised that the army had grown to such proportions, but then again new people were added to his kingdom every week due to the unceasing efforts of Mr. Trang and his fleet. By now there were over twenty ships in the armada, many of them high-grade vessels like the corvette he bought last time.

The best part was that they had been added to his naval forces without any cost to his personal fortune. Taxes from the consortia and the crystals from the mine were already providing Port Atwood with a hefty monthly income by this point, which made maintenance and expansion much smoother.

Still, eight thousand was nothing compared to a horde of tens of millions of Zombies. Even if they killed a hundred Zombies each they would barely have scratched the surface.

"This will also prove as an excellent opportunity for them. It is not easy to gain experience of large scale battles, but this provides just that," Ilvere added. "Many of our men are still quite low leveled, but an ocean of Zombies will provide an opportunity for rapid improvement."

"Well, it is settled then. Ilvere will be in charge of Port Atwood's forces. Try to cooperate with our allies and the Sino-Indian alliance, but the safety of our people comes first," Zac said.

"I understand," Ilvere said.

Zac suddenly had an idea as he looked at Ilvere, who seemed a bit confused by the stare.

"Here, take this," Zac said as he handed him a crystal.

"What's this? [Cyclic Strike]?" Ilvere said with some interest.

"It is a skill I received from the Lord of Cycles. It utilizes two opposite Daos to form a formidable attack. It is up to you whether you wish to learn it," Zac said. "But if you do learn it I would like to be updated on your progress in mastering it."

Zac had realized that Ilvere was working toward gaining both the Dao Seeds of Heaviness and Lightness. Zac wasn't sure, but perhaps the attack would work for him as well, and if he did manage to master the skill it might provide a shortcut for Zac to master it as well.

"So this skill is why you came by yesterday?" Alyn said with interest. "It is a very novel concept. Combining multiple Daos in one strike at F-Grade is quite uncommon."

"Thank you, I'll learn it. I am aiming to fuse the two into the Dao Fragment of Momentum, and this skill might help me toward that end," Ilvere said with some glee on his face. "If I learn something I will update you."

"Great," Zac said with a nod. "Next subject. The strike force. Who apart from Ogras should take part?"

"I guess I cannot opt out?" Ogras said with a grimace as he looked through the stack containing the information of the 17 incursions remaining on earth. "Some of these forces are pretty dangerous."

"You ate my food, now you need to work for it a bit," Zac said. "So, who else?"

"We have mastered the War Arrays for up to 18 people," Joanna said, speaking up for the first time of the meeting. "Truth be told we won't be able to increase your strength by a large degree, but we will be able to form a small shield that covers our small squad. With such a small area of protection, the shield will be extremely sturdy."

Zac nodded, feeling it was a good idea. Having that small squad with him would help protect Billy from harm.

"That sounds like a plan. Your main goal should be to guard Billy from surprise attacks. He is very strong, but his defenses aren't the best," Zac said.

"I will put together a team of our strongest people," Joanna nodded in affirmation.

"You should bring the feral child as well," Alyn suddenly added.

"Who? Emelie?" Zac exclaimed. "Absolutely not."

"She is only level 31, but her attributes are a match to many of the Valkyries," Alea added. "Besides, she is a support class."

"I am not sure I need the boost against the Incursions," Zac hesitantly said. "It's not worth risking her life for that."

"It's not only about that," Alyn said. "Support classes gain Cosmic Energy by simply empowering their allies. As long as you kill someone under the effect of her axes she will gain a part of the experience. Her

levels would skyrocket if she came with you. And she could stay within the shield created by the spear maidens."

"Honestly if you don't bring her she will get herself in trouble somewhere else," Ogras said. "She has turned almost crazy in her pursuit of power the last days. She said she needs to go to the underworld. Better keep her in sight where we can protect her. And you're rich enough to deck her in enough defensive treasures to almost guarantee her life."

Zac sighed when he heard about the teenager's situation. She was probably extremely anxious to scour the underworld for her siblings. It was the last chance for her to find anyone of her old family alive.

"Fine, but keep her away from the fighting. I want her at maximum distance from me so people don't figure out she's a support," Zac relented.

"Anything else before we head out?" Zac said as he looked around the table. "Communication might be impossible for a while."

"There is the issue of the evolutions," Ogras suddenly said.

"The what?" Zac asked with confusion.

"Between the Origin Dao and the ample resources provided by Port Atwood, there are a decent amount of demonkin warriors who are able to evolve by this point," Ogras said.

"So what's the problem?" Zac asked.

"Most are still only able to gain a common class and are afraid we will force them to upgrade before the wars. They want to hold off on upgrading in favor of improving further before upgrading. As for the few who are able to gain an Uncommon class, they are afraid to evolve because of us," Ogras said.

"Us? Why?" Zac asked with confusion.

"None of the leadership are E-Grade yet. Evolving at this stage might be seen as a power play," Ogras explained. "It's extremely uncommon for anyone apart from the core group to hold the highest levels in a force."

"Well, our situation is a bit special," Zac said with a shrug. "Have as many as possible evolve into Uncommon classes, we need all the help we can get. Will they be able to evolve before we head out tomorrow?"

"It's only Uncommon classes, there will be no trial for them," Ogras said with a nod. "They can join us."

"Good, I want a small elite squad to mainly support the Valkyries and contain the battle," Zac said. "And let those who can't evolve to a decent class wait. Having them evolve into a useless class won't really strengthen us enough for it to make a difference."

"Agreed," Ogras said. "I'll handle it."

"Great. There is one more thing that those who participate in the fight need to do as well," Zac suddenly said. "They all need to enter a contract with me. One that will last indefinitely. In return they will get a monthly stipend."

"What?" exclamations echoed across the table, with only Ogras seeming to understand what was going on.

"You should all understand that my power does not only come from my levels. The details of a few of my lucky encounters will be exposed during the battles, but they can absolutely not be spread. Therefore I need to enact this protocol," Zac explained. "The Valkyries are excluded since they are already in a contract of servitude."

It was a measure to protect the information about his second class and race. Zac either needed to do this, or kill everyone who participated, and he was unwilling to do the latter.

"What about the big one?" Ogras said.

"I'll talk with him about it," Zac answered.

"Will you tell us what's going on?" Alea asked, her eyes thinning in suspicion.

"No, it might only implicate you," Zac said with a resolute shake of his head.

"What about witnesses?" Ogras said.

"We'll handle it," Zac answered, some ruthlessness appearing on his face.

Ogras nodded approvingly and didn't prod any further.

"Anyone who spread this out will be executed, no matter who it is," Ogras added without hesitation.

"Great. As for the final subject," Zac said as he reached for the pile of intelligence in front of Ogras. "This is the first target."

"Human Incursion, Ez'Mahal Confederation?" Ogras muttered. "Never heard of them. Anyone else?"

Everyone shook their head as well, indicating that they had no idea who they were.

"I picked this faction because of their ruthlessness against the natives in their zone. There are reports of indiscriminate murder and torture," Zac said with a frown. "I want these people gone from Earth first."

After reading through the information dossier there was obviously an extremely wide range of strategies employed by the invaders. Very few forces were like the Church of Everlasting Dao or the Undead Empire. Most simply conquered the area and turned their sphere of influence into slave colonies.

In some areas, humans were actually better off under control of the invaders compared to life in general. There were structure and security, and the deaths from the unforgiving wildlife were far less common.

But the Ez'Mahal Confederation was not one of these forces. Zac had already heard about them during his first visit to New Washington, and since then it had only become worse. The small country they had set up might be the worst place on earth apart from a scant few places like the Miasmic Zone and the Cradle of god. Killing them would not only free people living in horrible conditions but also create a lot of goodwill across the world.

"Low to Medium tier," Ogras muttered as he read through the report again. "They haven't shown any particularly strong traits. Obsessed with class systems, uses slaves like we use the Barghest. A force like this is usually quite fragile. A good place to push your level forward."

"I want to avoid killing slaves as much as possible. The real targets are their leaders," Zac said. "In fact, that should be the goal for all our operations. I will target the leaders, Ogras will occupy generals and assist the rest of you, while the rest keep reinforcements at bay. Ideally, the battles should not last more than a few minutes."

The group kept going over the details for a bit until Zac adjourned the meeting. Everyone hurriedly left to prepare themselves for the intense battles that they would be thrown into. Zac spent the night once again switching between trying to activate [Cyclic Strike] and activating the toy before sleeping in.

At 8 am he woke up, ready for war.