

## The Fall 312

### Chapter 312: Blood for Blood

Zac couldn't bother with the cleanup of the battlefield as his mind was too preoccupied with other things. He had finally reached level 75, and he was anxious to see the gains it would bring. He knew he had become extremely powerful for a planet this early into an integration, but this battle proved that he was by no means invulnerable.

The most common way of closing Incursions for newly integrated worlds was with massive armies to drown the invaders through sheer numbers. Such a tactic required the whole world to come together and sacrifice millions of lives, and it was because of this that so few newly integrated planets made it through the early phase.

Planets who passed the initial stage through the effort of solitary powerhouses were far less common since normal powerhouses like Thea or even Salvation wasn't enough to singlehandedly close all the incursions of a world. He knew that the Marshall Clan had taken huge losses from the subjugation of their Incursion, even with Thea's help. It took something out of the norm, a monster in human form like Zac, close them as they did now.

But even Zac felt he was barely able to hold on. The cultivators of the incursions came from a wide array of forces, and many of them possessed all kinds of hidden cards that Zac had never encountered before. The bell was such an example. It had knocked him right out without him even having time to react.

So the power-ups of reaching the peak of F-Grade were just what he needed to have greater confidence to tackle the stronger Incursions as well. He only hoped that the quests for the final skills would be possible to complete quickly, and he eagerly opened up his status screen to see what had changed.

Name

Zachary Atwood

Level

75

Class

[F-Rare] Hatchetman

Race

[E] Human

Alignment

[Earth] Port Atwood - Lord

Titles

Born for Carnage, Ultimate Reaper, Luck of the Draw, Giantsbane, Disciple of David, Overpowered, Slayer of Leviathans, Adventurer, Demon Slayer I, Full of Class, Rarified Being, Trailblazer, Child of Dao,

The Big 500, Planetary Aegis, One Against Many, Butcher, Progenitor Noblesse, Duplicity Core, Apex Hunter, Heaven's Chosen, Scion of Dao, Omnidextrous, Eastern Trigram Hunt - 1st, Tyrannic Force, Achievement Hunter, The First Step

Limited Titles

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Dao

Seed of Heaviness - High, Seed of Trees - Peak, Seed of Sharpness - Middle, Seed of Hardness - Middle, Seed of Sanctuary - Middle, Seed of Rot - High

Core

[F] Duplicity

Strength

605 [Increase: 60%. Efficiency: 134%]

Dexterity

297 [Increase: 45%. Efficiency: 134%]

Endurance

752 [Increase: 71%. Efficiency: 134%]

Vitality

441 [Increase: 61%. Efficiency: 134%]

Intelligence

167 [Increase: 45%. Efficiency: 134%]

Wisdom

226 [Increase: 45%. Efficiency: 134%]

Luck

140 [Increase: 65%. Efficiency: 134%]

Free Points

21

Nexus Coins

[F] 364 950 610

He had made quite a bit of money closing the last Incursions, and he felt he needed to do something with his fortune soon. Perhaps he could invest it through Calrin, or at least use it to deploy more

projects like the large scale agriculture program. As it was now he had no personal need for the coins, and they were no good creating dust in his status screen.

His attributes hadn't noticeably changed though, with one surprising difference. It looked like the final level awarded ten level's worth of free attribute points, meaning he was awarded twenty points plus one from his class. Twenty points weren't a lot for Zac by now, but they would get heavily boosted through his titles. He also noticed a change in his title screen, and first opened that window.

[The First Step: Reach Peak of F-Grade Reward: All Stats +5.]

It was a bit disappointing that he didn't get another 'first in world'-title, but either there was no such thing or one of the Anointed snatched it. But from his experience, he felt the former to be more likely since he had a lot of other titles that the Zhix should have stolen if they shared the same title pool.

When he opened his quest screen two new quests awaited him, though he was slightly disappointed there was no new quest on his hegemony chain. But when he looked at the requirements to complete the two Class quests he started to grimace.

#### Class Quests

Deforestation (Class): Cut down a Tree reaching 500 meters in one swing. Reward: Deforestation Skill (0/1)

Hatchetman's Spirit (Class): Form a nature- or axe-Attuned Dao Fragment. Reward: Hatchetman's Spirit (0/1)

Zac didn't get any descriptions of the skills, but going by their names he felt that [Deforestation] should be the ultimate offensive skill of his class, perhaps something akin to Nenotheop's Spear World.

[Hatchetman's Spirit] might either be a defensive skill or some sort of Support skill, something to complement [Hatchetman's Rage].

[Hatchetman's Spirit] was both simple and hard to complete. Forming a Dao Fragment was something he would definitely do before evolving, but it was not something he was able to complete in the short run. It looked like he wouldn't have the skill to help him during the Incursions, and perhaps not even in the Tower of Eternity.

The [Deforestation] quest reminded him of his first Class Quest. That time he was supposed to chop wood, and now he needed to chop an enormous tree. He didn't think it would be too hard to chop one down, he simply needed to supersize a [Chop] and imbue it with the Dao of sharpness.

The problem was that he hadn't heard of any trees of that size on earth. Did they even exist? Things did grow bigger from the Cosmic Energy, but there were no such trees at Port Atwood at least. He would perhaps need to visit Westfort quickly after claiming this incursion to have their intelligence department see if they could find anything.

The next question was what to do with the 21 free points. Finally he chose to go all out on his main attribute, Strength. He was starting to veer away from the standard 2:1 balance with Dexterity, but with all his titles he already had more points in Dexterity than many agility-based classes would have at his level.

He did briefly consider putting the points in Wisdom to improve his mental defense. The attack from the bell was a poignant reminder that his mind wasn't as sturdy as his body. But he would have to put a huge amount of points into Wisdom to make a difference, and he felt it was more efficient to buy more mental defensive treasures to shore up that weakness.

Since he was done with his status screen he got up to his feet and walked toward the others. The Valkyries seemed quite excited when he approached, and he looked at them with some confusion.

"Congratulations on reaching level 75. Next stop E-Grade!" Joanna said with a smile as she held Nenotheop's spear in her hand.

The two had been inseparable since she got it, and she alone had likely killed as many enemies as the other Valkyries combined with its help. It was truly a testament that attribute was not the only important thing for a cultivator, the right equipment was almost equally important.

"Thank you," Zac smiled as his eyes glanced across the forest to see how the cleanup of all gear and Cosmos Sacks went. It appeared they were pretty much done.

"Don't forget about our appointment. In fact, stay away from the Nexus Node so you don't get any ideas," Ogras' voice suddenly echoed from the shadows.

"I know, don't worry," Zac said with a snort.

But Zac knew it wasn't inconceivable that he would simply skip going if it came to that. Things were heating up on Earth, and he wouldn't hesitate to evolve if things got desperate. He would lose a top tier title and the opportunity to make strong allies, but one needed to be alive to enjoy those benefits.

"Are there any movements from the Incursion?" Zac asked.

"None that we can see," Ogras said with a shrug. "The ambush contained most of their elites it seems. The others have likely evacuated by now unless they are fools."

Zac agreed. He had already got the notification that this area was under his control as well.

"That begs the question on how they knew we were coming," Ogras muttered.

This was something that crossed Zac's mind as well. Just how had these people know to lie in wait?

"They may have some sort of diviner," Ogras added. "But there is a simpler solution. I think the Marshall Clan might have realized we are even stronger than they expected. Perhaps they thought we would lose elites from every battle, leaving us considerably weakened after we had finished closing the incursions. But when they saw that wasn't the case they tried to make it happen by leaking intelligence."

Zac was about to disagree with Ogras' words without even considering it, but he stopped himself. He truly didn't believe Thea would do something like that, and Henry's main focus was on ridding Earth of all invaders. But the Marshall Clan consisted of thousands of people, most of whom had no relation to him or Port Atwood. Some people might have betrayed their cooperation for a misguided attempt to help their clan.

"We will report it to the main branch of the Marshalls, and we'll just have to be more careful. I have some things I need to look into with the Marshall people as well," Zac eventually said, as he started to walk toward their cars. "Let's go secure the core town."

"Joanna has reached the ladder!" another of the Valkyries suddenly blurted out when it was apparent that Zac was preparing to leave.

Zac's eyes widened, and he quickly stopped in his tracks to open the ladder. It was true; Joanna was currently on the 98th position at level 47, meaning she had gained three levels since the assaults started. He wasn't too surprised considering how high the levels of their prey were, but his brows instead rose when he saw the name she had chosen.

98th – Atwood Valkyrie Joanna – 47

"Congratulations. But why not use your own name?" Zac asked.

"We need the world to know that Port Atwood is not just you and the demons, no offense Ogras," Joanna explained. "Hopefully, we'll get a few more of the Valkyries on the ladder soon. We had already decided on this naming scheme long ago in case we ever got on the ladder. It was quicker than we expected."

"Great job, keep it up," Zac said with a smile. "And it's a good idea. I'll put out some good rewards for anyone of Port Atwood who reaches the ladder, no matter which one. Try to figure out what you want and I'll try to make it happen."

The group made their way toward the core city of the incursion, but they didn't hurry in case they had left more ambushes on the way. Luckily no attack arrived, and they drove straight through the wide-open gates of the alien town four hours later.

But Zac was enraged the moment they entered the walled city, as the invaders had left a gift for him. A mountain of human corpses was thrown into a pile reaching over fifteen meters on the main square. The whole area dyed red from thousands of liters of blood, and a hastily written message were scribbled on the walls in red.

"'Blood for Blood' it says," Ogras said with a frown. "Foolish."

Zac ground his teeth as he looked at the scene that could be straight out of a nightmare. The blood still hadn't dried on their bodies, meaning they were probably executed the moment these people noticed their leader had fallen. Killing innocents who were no threat just as some sort of petty revenge could only be considered as extreme cowardice. They could just have left through the Nexus Hub, but they stayed behind to butcher all these people out of spite.

"Blood for blood," Zac repeated with anger smoldering in his eyes. "They better pray I won't find them in the multiverse later. Search the area. If any invaders remain, kill them."

Zac himself walked over to the pile and personally put them all in a spare Cosmos Sack before he bought a new teleporter. These people had been enslaved in life and killed for no reason. Giving them a proper burial was the least he could do.

While the forces of Port Atwood secured the area he headed over to Westfort. Ogras insisted on coming along, saying that Zac might back down too quickly in their interrogation. Zac could only acquiesce, and he thought it was fine since Thea was away at the frontlines in any case.

Roland Marshall rushed over ten minutes after they arrived, and when he heard they needed intelligence he drove them to one of the large mansions within the inner wall. It was the headquarters for the intelligence arm of the Marshall Clan, and if anyone knew of any such trees it would be them. Zac explained what he was looking for, though he didn't mention it was due to his quest.

"So, have you found any trees like that on earth?" Zac asked.

"Well, there is a species of trees from the Ishiate world that grew almost as large as the Redwoods of earth. A few of them might have grown larger than 500 meters by now," the intelligence officer who had been assigned to help them out thoughtfully said. "But I would avoid those trees unless you truly need them."

"Why?" Zac asked with a frown.

"From what we have gathered the trees are called Treefathers, and they are holy places to the Ishiate. Even the technologically inclined camp of the beastmen considers the trees holy. If you cut down one of them you might inadvertently declare war with the whole Ishiate population," the man explained.

"Is there no other place?" Zac sighed, wanting to avoid that kind of trouble if possible.

"Well, there are the actual redwoods," the man said. "Many of them were over a hundred meters before the integration, so one having mutated and grown to five hundred meters is within the realm of possibilities. We have many other examples of plant life growing to that degree compared to their former sizes," the man said, but his face was still troubled.

"So, spit it out. What's the problem?" Ogras snorted.

"The former Redwood forests are within the Cradle of God."