

The Fall 356

Chapter 356: Final Stand

Ilvere roared in defiance as the huge ball belonging to his weapon shuddered with power, and its trajectory suddenly turned impossible to predict. One second the chunk of metal looked as though it was so light that it might as well be a mirage, but the next moment it gave Alea the impression she was gazing upon a towering mountain.

The two opposing impressions kept swapping until they superimposed, making the weapon emit a shocking energy. The weapon slammed into the Corpse Golem that was guarding one of the Unholy Beacons that the undead army wanted to move to the vanguard to empower their assault.

Alea frowned when she saw the undead abomination effortlessly catch the ball in its arms as though it didn't contain a shred of momentum. But the next moment the Corpse Golem exploded, its bodyparts flying out like projectiles in all directions.

The wrecking ball started moving again and slammed into one of the Unholy Beacons with enough force to cause a crack, but it wasn't enough for it to break altogether. But it was just enough to topple it, and when the tower crashed into the ground it released a burst of errant energies that killed the nearby Zombies. A few unlucky undead warriors were killed from getting hit by the remaining bodyparts of the 4-meter tall Golem as well, making Alea shake her head in wonder.

"Not quite there," the demon warrior muttered with annoyance, for some reason not happy even though he had managed to destroy one of the Unholy Beacons.

Alea wanted to rebuke the man for experimenting with the skill he got from Lord Atwood in the middle of the battle, but it clearly produced results. She instead focused on the sea of zombies ahead. Things were getting desperate, and she had no time to worry too much about others.

The ambush at Baoqui had cost them most of their resources, not to mention the 3000 people who fell in battle. The undead had likely planned on ending it all when they finally reached the town, but they had underestimated just how tough it would be to break the warriors of Port Atwood.

Six days of constant harassment had pushed them all beyond what they thought was possible, but many had risen to the challenge and grown tremendously. Hundreds of people died during the death march, but just as many had gained Dao Seeds that allowed them to unleash twice the destruction as before.

Besides, the undead hadn't expected them to carry eight ships possessing sieging capabilities. Over half of their forces fell to the immediate bombardment by the arrays on the ships. Alea hadn't heard of the Allbright Empire that Lord Atwood got his shipyard from, but their craftsmanship was impeccable. Unfortunately, they had run out of hidden cards by now. The ships had been destroyed, over half of them left behind them the past two days as they were beyond salvage.

The Ishiate cannons were all destroyed as well, and only a third of the tinkerers remained alive. The undead learned their lesson after the first time the large brass cannons were unleashed, and they mounted a sneak attack to take most of them out. If it wasn't for one of the mad scientists rushing forward and directly detonating one of the bombs to kill all the attackers, along with himself, they would have lost all of the beastmen.

Alea was running out of poison as well. She better understood the mentality of Lord Atwood after this past week, why he had pushed himself to never leave the battlefield during the beast waves. Because every time you stepped back to rest, someone would have to offer their life in return. Such was the burden of the leader.

Alea only had enough accumulated poison for one or two large battles, but there was no point in worrying about the future when it wasn't even sure that they would even survive the next hour. The army in front of them had appeared out of nowhere, dashing the hope that they finally had killed all of the true undead elites hunting them.

The army consisted of over ten thousand elite zombies, but that wasn't the real problem. There were almost a hundred Corpse Golems and two hundred Corpse Lords, each one of them more powerful than her demonkin warriors. She needed to even the numbers somewhat.

She looked over at the shrouded demon in the distance, and Janos nodded as he closed his eyes. Alea wasted no time as she activated [Odorless] and unleashed almost all of her stored up toxins she had concocted to deal with the undead. However, even if she had opened the floodgates to release a tremendous amount of poison didn't look like anything happened, and the undead kept pushing forward.

This was Janos' ultimate skill, creating a massive illusion that kept the world going, apart from one hidden truth. In this case, it was the extremely potent poison that rapidly spread among the undead, unwittingly drilling into their bodies. But the Undead were no fools, and it looked like reality cracked after just a second, exposing the vast clouds of poison that had encompassed a fifth of the army.

Four hooded cultivators standing by the ten Unholy Beacons in the back suddenly floated up into the air as they pointed shriveled fingers at the mists of deadly poison. Alea was shocked to notice that she lost connection to the poison as the four cultivators somehow ragged it up into the air. A huge skull appeared as well, and it sucked up the poison in one deep chomp before disappearing.

Alea grimaced when she saw the mysterious cultivators countering her skill so easily, but the damage was already done to a certain extent. An enormous amount of cosmic energy surged into her body as thousands of zombies and dozens of Corpse Lords toppled over, creating a large hole in the undead army. Of course, most of the energy quickly escaped from her body as she had long reached level 75.

But just as Alea breathed out in relief that her attack was mostly successful a specter that radiated killing intent rose out of the ground in front of her. It was a hooded skeleton, but it wasn't corporeal. It was mostly translucent and seemed to be wrought out of a dark-green Death attuned energy.

The fighters of Port Atwood had encountered spectral combatants before, but this one was completely different from the weak ghosts that were quickly rebuffed with the help of Divine Energy. The whole area turned cold when it appeared, and Alea's instincts screamed of danger.

She didn't even let the thing take a single step before six pitch-black spikes appeared in the air, all of them aiming to impale the ghost as quickly as possible. The ghost moved like a gust toward her, expertly dodging the first three spikes in an instant. But luckily she managed to graze the ghost with the fourth spike, and the tremendous pain the attack elicited made the ghost freeze for an instant.

Alea immediately shot the other two spikes into the chest of the ghost, forcibly enduring the searing pain in her own chest as she received the same damage as the one she inflicted. The ghost was clearly in tremendous pain as well, but it only gazed at her as it forced out a snicker as the dead rose all around her.

The eight translucent spears stabbed into her from all directions before Alea had a chance to react, and she couldn't stop herself from screaming in pain even though not a single drop of blood was spilled. It felt as though her very being was crumbling as her soul was getting ripped apart. She had no way to retaliate or even form a coherent thought as the pain stretched into eternity.

A golden sea suddenly washed over the area, drowning Alea and the wraiths in divine splendor. The eight wraiths were badly wounded by the attack, as thick streams of miasma escaped from their bodies as they endured the life-attuned attack.

"Don't force it, she won't survive," one of the wraiths finally grunted. "We'll collect the body later, the Lord wants it."

The others nodded and shrunk into the ground, fleeing the corrosive effect of the divine ocean. Alea couldn't understand what was happening, still consumed by the inhuman torment of her soul rending. But a warm soothing stream soon entered her body, keeping her fracturing self together for the time being.

Alea opened her eyes and saw a small human holding her hands, continuously infusing her with a warm energy that acted as insulation that kept her mind from dissipating. Around them stood a group of Valkyries who slaughtered any errant zombie that got close, but luckily the poison from earlier had killed almost everything in the vicinity.

"You're... Sui...?" Alea vaguely remembered the name of the purifier who somehow had found their army along with a few hundred warriors three days ago.

Apparently, they were a private army run by one of the towns that formerly stood at the edge of the Dead Zone, but it had long been overrun by the undead. Alea hadn't really had time to get to know them better due to the constant battle, but any assistance was a blessing to their extremely wrung out force.

The small girl in front of her had proven extremely helpful, especially after they figured out that she could reach a terrifying power with the help of the combination of the Valkyrie War Array and the Divine Array. She would be useless against the living, but she was a true nemesis to the undead. She only lacked the ruthlessness to take full advantage of her gift.

"Your soul is in a terrible state," Sui said with a pale face, as she had the Valkyries carry Alea away from the front line. "I don't-"

"I know my situation," Alea interrupted with a sigh, allowing herself to be moved back to the defensive line.

She felt as weak as a newborn child, barely able to lift her own hand. But she kept a strong face, hoping that the scared soldiers looking in her directions wouldn't understand how bad it was. Their morale was low enough after their ten-day death march, and she did not want to tack on any further.

The group of specters suddenly appeared around the desperately battling Ilvere, who had been forced to take charge of the whole front line after Alea fell. Her heart was gripped in panic when she saw their appearance, but Ilvere did not look worried. He only released a shrill whistle, and he was immediately pelted with attacks.

But shockingly enough he wasn't attacked by the undead, but rather their own people. Hundreds of arrows fell where he stood almost blotting out the sky for an instant. Rage started to burn in Alea's heart as she helplessly remained in the care of Sui.

"Don't worry," Sui said. "It's not what it looks like."

Only then did Alea realize that the arrows had a golden hue, looking like the arrows of a celestial. They had been imbued with divine energy and didn't pass through the Wraiths as expected, but rather caused small golden explosions the moment they hit the incorporeal bodies. The wraiths wailed in pain and hurried to

Ilvere was actually not unscathed from the arrows, and a few of the projectiles had embedded themselves in his body. However, Ilvere's armor was pretty strong and the golden explosions didn't have any effect on the living, so he only received shallow flesh wounds. He had simply used himself as bait to attack the wraiths, and he was ready to bear the small pain.

The Wraiths had taken some damage from the surprise attack, but unfortunately it wasn't enough to kill them. Luckily they were at least forced to retreat, and they scurried back to the rear of the undead army with shocking speed.

The retreat of the squad of powerful assassins lessened the pressure on Port Atwood to a great degree, but they were still in desperate straits. The air was filled with screams as one warrior after another fell to the relentless assault of the invaders.

The Corpse Lords were just too strong, and three demons needed to co-operate just to keep one them at bay. The recruits were far worse off, and whole squads had been mercilessly slaughtered the moment the elite undead found an opening in their formations. Alea wanted to help, but she barely could keep herself awake, let alone rejoin the battle.

A wrathful roar suddenly echoed across the battlefield from above, making Alea look up with confusion and hope. A large disk was shooting toward them in the sky, and it seemed to be descending like a meteor. One person standing on top of it wasn't even patient enough for it to land, and he pushed off from the flying treasure with enough force to cause it to almost crash.

The man shot forward through the air like a bullet, crashing into the sea of undead with earth-shattering force. The shockwave caused the whole battle to stop for a second, as only the strongest managed to keep their footing. The zombies unfortunate enough to have stood close to the impact zone were completely gone, turned into mush at the bottom of the large crater. But the man was completely fine, and Alea could finally confirm her suspicion when he stood up.

Lord Atwood had finally arrived.