

## The Fall 365

### Chapter 365: Lunatics

Zac looked around the rubble, slightly shocked at the ferocity of the battle. Less than 20% of the Abyssal Demons had chosen to retreat and instead opted to fight with furious intensity against the Tal-Eladar attackers, even after their leader was decapitated. They were true berserkers, roaring on top of their lungs as they tried to rip him apart. But the Abyssal Demons were not the only ones who fought with reckless abandon.

"You people are lunatics," Zac muttered with a shake of his head.

Verana, who was almost completely drenched in blood, had a satisfied look on her face as she oversaw the looting of the town. Zac could understand her happiness since the fight could be considered a resounding win for the Tal-Eladar against the Demonkin. Verana had been a goddess of war, causing bloodshed wherever she went, making the battle turn completely in their favor.

After Verana quickly killed the two generals stuck outside Zac's cage with the help of her snake and an offensive array the war was mostly turned into a slaughter. It made a huge difference to have a powerhouse presiding over the battlefield. They could put their thumb on the scale, causing a massive reduction in casualties.

Of course, none of that would have been possible without the help of Zac himself. He captured a good hundred elites along with the leader and two of his generals within [Profane Seal], substantially weakening their defenses and causing chaos. While they were trying to get their leader out of the cage Verana and her beast masters could advance without any real resistance.

"Grudges built upon grudges," Verana said with a wry smile. "The Boundless Heavens thrives on conflict as war forces us to get stronger or perish. You cannot fight it, so you might as well adapt to it."

Zac sighed, feeling a bit hopeless at the prospect of living a life of constant strife. He was currently struggling because there were threats against his people in all directions, but was that all life was supposed to amount to? Putting out one fire after another while getting stronger. Was that truly the goal of cultivation?

But Zac forced himself to snap out of his brooding as he bought a teleportation array and nodded at one of the Valkyries who immediately stepped through. A few hundred warriors stepped through the teleporter twenty minutes later, and they looked wide-eyed at the utter destruction around them.

It was the soldiers that worked for the Union, which technically made them his people. They had mostly kept up their previous duties, but they came in handy now. Zac wouldn't entrust them with any important tasks, but scouring the area for lingering threats or points of interest shouldn't be any problem for them.

Zac simply sat down on top of a boulder to overlook it all as he restored his missing miasma. He also called for Harvath, the demon captain who had kept his squad in the hidden cave system beneath the Underworld Nexus until now. The demon had been in charge of clearing out the Technocrat Incursion, but it should be dealt with now.

The demon arrived soon enough, and he sighed deeply with conflicted emotions as he looked around at the rubble. Zac could understand his feelings, but he didn't know what to say. The two walked over to a secluded spot, and Zac activated an array disk to shroud them from prying eyes.

"Is something the matter?" the demon asked curiously when he saw Zac's actions.

"I need you to do something, but you can't let the Tal-Eladar catch on," Zac said.

The demon's eyes lit up, and he clearly had no moral compunctions about pulling a fast one on his new allies. Zac smiled when he saw Harvath's reaction and took out one of his Beast Crystals.

"This is...?" Harvath said with some hesitation as he inspected the crystal.

"It's a Beast Crystal, an item for nurturing beasts. I found a large mine of these things. I want you to send a group of experienced people to clean out that whole place for me. The mine is nowhere near as big as the Nexus Mine, so it should only take a few days for a strong crew," Zac said. "The Tal-Eladar would be frothing at the mouth for these things, so don't let them follow you."

"Absolutely," Harvath immediately nodded.

Zac wasn't sure exactly how the Tal-Eladar would react in regards to these crystals, so he chose to not take any risks with them. The crystals might be extremely valuable for the Tal-Eladar, but he knew that the invaders were extremely low on Nexus Coins since they weren't able to bring it to Earth. And Zac needed the money now rather than later.

"Extract the crystals as quickly as possible. I hope to use them to trade for a treasure to treat Alea within two weeks," Zac explained.

The demon's countenance immediately turned somber and he quickly memorized the path as Zac imparted it to him. Alea's situation had already spread among the demons, and they had almost exploded in rage. The poison mistress had proven herself for the demons, and many of them wanted to immediately rush out to fight the undead to the death when learning of the ambush that felled her.

Zac knew that Harvath would perform the task with utmost efficiency after seeing his expression, so he nodded and let him immediately head out.

"What was that about?" Verana said with a smile as she walked over.

"Just delegating a few minor tasks," Zac smiled back.

The cleanup and reorganization took half a day, which was much faster than normal thanks to the help of the vast number of people in the Union's employ. It was only now that Zac truly realized that the people under his command in the underworld was more than ten times that of his people on the surface.

But Zac wasn't satisfied with only closing one of the remaining four incursions in the underworld, and he wanted to ride the momentum. He immediately ordered an assault on the human Incursion next, since he was afraid they had spies in the cities that would warn them what transpired here. He didn't want to give them too much time to prepare their defenses.

The strength of the Abyssal Demon Incursion was higher than Zac expected, and he would categorize it as firmly in the mid-tier. He was afraid that all the incursions in the underworld were stronger than the norm, which was why he didn't want to give them any heads-up.

The army set out almost immediately, and they were joined by a squad of elite Demons as well now that they were able to show themselves. Smaug surprisingly enough requested to join the mission as well, and Zac figured that the man and his arrays would come in handy.

With the reinforcements to his ranks the battle went just as expected. It would normally be extremely strenuous and costly to assault the incursions that were placed inside large town caves, but having Zac as the vanguard kept the whole army safe as he blocked out all the attacks from the invaders with the help of his bulwark.

Any time Zac needed to move or rest for a second Smaug was there, throwing out a handful of balls that created extremely durable shields for a couple of seconds. Zac wasn't sure how much money the man was burning during the battle, but if the man wanted to prove himself with the help of his wallet he was very welcome to do so.

It was better the guy spent some of his money than people losing their lives.

The elites of Port Atwood swept through the whole underworld, and in just five days only the final Incursion remained; the Fire Golems. Zac kept pushing himself to his limit, trapping larger and larger groups in his Miasmic Cage in the engagements.

The frantic battles were not without their gains. Each one of them had awarded Zac with a level, pushing him all the way to level 73 for his Undying Bulwark Class. It was nowhere near as good as the Technocrat Incursion, but he didn't get any quest that gave a large boost to the energy he gained. Besides, the final 5 levels were quite a bit harder to gain than the earlier ones.

After having closed the Fishman Incursion Zac finally allowed himself to take a breather, so he informed Verana and Harvath that he would enter seclusion for two days. He needed to consolidate his gains from his last fights. Besides, his people were wrung dry from fighting three incursions in short succession.

Fighting along with himself didn't help either. It had become painfully obvious that his Undying Bulwark class was just as Yrial described it; made for a leader of the undead. His [Fields of Despair] was essentially poisoning the people fighting alongside him, though they weren't affected by the attribute reduction like his enemies. Now that he had [Winds of Decay] as well he was almost as big a threat to his own people as his enemies.

Luckily the people who joined him against the underworld incursions were among the strongest people in his force, so they weren't too badly affected as long as they didn't get too close to him during battle. But since they didn't have a lot of Vitality they needed a prolonged rest before they tackled the more threatening fire golems.

Besides, Zac believed that his army would have returned by that point, providing him with more competent fighters. So Zac returned to his compound on his island, as that was where he had the easiest time to relax. The first thing he did was to go through his status screen to see how his progress was before he could comfortably evolve.

Name

Zachary Atwood

Level

73

Class

[F-Epic] Undying Bulwark

Race

[E] Draugr

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

Frontrunner

Dao

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

Core

[F] Duplicity

Strength

749 [Increase: 60%. Efficiency: 140%]

Dexterity

320 [Increase: 45%. Efficiency: 140%]

Endurance

992 [Increase: 60%. Efficiency: 140%]

Vitality

471 [Increase: 50%. Efficiency: 140%]

Intelligence

174 [Increase: 45%. Efficiency: 140%]

Wisdom

255 [Increase: 45%. Efficiency: 140%]

Luck

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

Free Points

0

Nexus Coins

[F] 184 500 077

He had already put his free points into Strength, but he sighed when he saw the disparity between his Strength and Endurance. He had hoped to decrease the gap between the two attributes, as he did not want to accidentally pigeonhole himself into tank classes when he evolved.

He would pass a thousand Endurance by the time he leveled up, while he wasn't sure he'd ever get to that point with his Strength, even after evolving his Dao seeds and getting the Title from the tower. From how things looked he wouldn't gain a lot of Strength from his final Dao Upgrades either.

Dao

Stage

Effect

Heaviness

Peak

Strength +90, Endurance +25, Wisdom +5

Sharpness

High

Strength +5, Dexterity +40, Intelligence +10, Wisdom +5

Trees

Peak

Endurance +20, Vitality +90, Intelligence +5, Wisdom +5

Hardness

High

Endurance +50, Wisdom +10.

Sanctuary

High

Endurance +25, Intelligence +10, Wisdom +25.

Rot

High

Endurance +5, Intelligence +10, Wisdom +45.

His Daos were coming along nicely, even though he hadn't evolved any of them from his last three fights. He had however gained a few insights that he hoped he could turn into Peak Grade Dao Seeds without the help of his last Dao Treasure. He wanted to save that thing for when they cracked open the Dao Funnel in a week or two.

Closing the three incursions, unfortunately, didn't give him any Titles either, but he had made great strides in another department; his skills. The only skill for his undead class that remained at Early mastery was [Indomitable]. [Fields of Despair], [Winds of Decay] and even [Profane Seal] reached middle mastery from the intense battles.

His only idea to improve [Indomitable] was to fight enemies using mental attacks, but those didn't exist among the underworld Incursions. He kept it running constantly since his experience with the ambush that knocked him out, but it didn't seem to improve the skill.

He still hadn't had a chance to experiment with the improved skills, but he had a feeling they would allow him to push the final two levels with greater ease. However, they did not make up for another glaring problem that he found himself facing; he no longer had a shield.