

The Fall 412

Chapter 412: Voidfire

The gargantuan devil from earlier hadn't seriously tried to kill Zac judging by the massive attacks they unleashed in their battle against the peak warrior from the allied army. It had only swung its weapon down without imbuing it with the Dao or any skill. Perhaps it had only considered him a bug to be squashed, and if it failed it didn't really matter.

It was pretty disconcerting to get thrown into a mess like this, but he had a mission to fulfill. His eyes turned back and forth until he spotted a red flare in the distance. He immediately changed course and found Galau desperately fighting a group of the smallest devils that weren't even as tall as a man.

Zac flashed over and made short work of the group with the help of a Dao-infused [Chop], and none of the other cannon-fodder seemed willing to avenge their brethren for the time being.

"Have you seen Ogras?" Zac asked as he looked around.

"I'm right here, what took you so long?" a lackadaisical voice drifted out of Galau's shadows as the demon appeared.

"You!" Galau stammered. "I could have died!"

"I was ready to help out if things turned bloody. You want to be a traveling merchant, right? I was helping you gain some experience. What if you meet highwaymen in the future? After fighting these guys it would be a breeze, no?" the demon laughed.

Galau spluttered for a bit, but a prompt cut short any chance of a rebuttal.

[Aid the war efforts against the tide of the Verakh. Stop the activation of a [Voidfire Array], or deactivate an activated array.]

The three barely had time to read the whole prompt before battle lust overcame the fear among the devils close-by, and a squad charged the three as they screeched at the top of their lungs.

"Who is the floor guardian in a scenario like this?" Zac asked as he cut a frenzied dragon beast in two. "There's no way we can defeat the leader of this devil army."

"The quest is to stop an array from being planted. So I guess that there is some Array master within our power level that we can kill. It's not always completely clear in the beginning from here on out from what I've gathered, so I could be wrong," the demon shrugged. "I suggest we try for the quest. It seems somewhat doable, and we'll also find clues of the guardian. Better yet, it might net us a nasty Array."

"Agreed," Zac nodded.

The issue was how to find their target in a chaotic battlefield like this.

"The array is called an [Voidfire Array]. Can you see anything that fits the description on the battlefield?" Zac asked as he looked around.

"It sounds like an offensive array. Arrays like this are usually placed close to the frontlines to maximize power, but not at the very front as to avoid sabotage," Galau chimed in.

The trouble was that there was no clear divide indicating where the frontline was. The battlefield could almost be seen as hundreds of individual skirmishes between squads or powerhouses, with weaker combatants strewn in-between.

There were individuals of both camps almost all over to the point it was even difficult to discern which side each army came from. Perhaps it was a measure to avoid either side unleashing massive arrays that could decimate a large chunk of the army. Luckily there was a group of titans standing in a clump far in the distance, which meant that the enemy commanders were likely stationed there.

Similarly, there was a middle-aged man standing on a massive floating sword some ways behind them, overlooking the battlefield with a stern expression. It was probably the leader of the army they had been conscripted into, and he emanated a towering aura that could be sensed all the way over to where they stood.

"Don't look," Ogras said as he slapped Zac's shoulder with his spear. "We don't want any attention from the big bosses."

"I can't see anything that looks like Voidfire," Zac said. "Let's make our way toward the enemy camp."

The three formed a small squad where Zac took the front and Ogras the flanks as they steamrolled deeper into the army. Galau helped out by making sure they didn't get too close to any of the elites, which forced them to take a somewhat circuitous pathing.

After they had pushed forward for roughly 15 minutes Zac was forced to slow down, as he realized there were only a scant few humanoids around them now. They had clearly entered the side of the enemies, and he was starting to get mobbed by the devil foot soldiers.

He hadn't utilized any of his stronger skills though as he had a feeling that doing so might draw the ire of too strong enemies. So he simply kept cutting down enemies one by one while keeping a fractal blade from [Chop] attached to his axe, while the independent blade protected their rear.

"Over there!" Galau suddenly exclaimed, making Zac look over to their left.

There was a beast carrying a massive purple pillar on its back, and a group of hooded beings walked along its side. Judging from their direction it seemed they were heading toward a titan rampaging in the distance. Was the [Voidfire Array] perhaps a support array? Or did they simply want to strike a surprise attack at whoever arrived to combat the titan?

"That looks like an array core," Ogras agreed. "Let's steal it."

"Isn't it easier just to break it?" Zac interjected. "I can probably do it from here."

"And leave such a nice thing in this world?" Ogras disagreed. "Better it comes with us."

"If we can even use it. What if it explodes in our faces?" Zac said.

"One step at a time," Ogras smiled as he flashed away.

Zac could only sigh and follow as he grabbed Galau's shoulder. He activated [Loamwalker] and moved straight through the battlefield, each step bringing him over fifty meters away. Ogras was even quicker, and a pond of shadows spread out when he arrived in front of the group.

The fractal edge on Zac's blade grew as he decapitated the warbeast carrying the Array Core in one massive swing, making hundreds of liters of blood to fall like a waterfall, drenching him in a second.

"Huerk," Galau hurled from behind, still squeamish about these kinds of gory scenes.

Zac only shook his head to get the blood out of his eyes and jumped over to the carcass of the beast. One yank was enough to rip apart the chains that kept the large crystals fastened, but Zac swore when he realized that he couldn't put it in his Cosmos Sack.

This had happened a few times before during the climb, generally when the quest called for delivering or protecting an item. Perhaps it was a method for the System to disallow the climbers from completely circumventing the trials by stashing away the quest items.

"Just carry it with you," Ogras said, but he looked a bit pressured.

"What's wrong?" Zac asked as he fastened the massive crystal like a backpack.

"The quest still isn't complete," the demon answered with a sour face, making Zac's brows rise in realization.

"Is this the wrong item?" Zac asked.

This was the problem with the quests on the higher floors. Things weren't as clear-cut as before, and it often took some trial and error before they could figure out what needed to be done. The fact that they needed to do so in the middle of an epic battle-field this time increased the pressure to another tier though.

"It might be only a piece of the puzzle," Galau mused, his face deathly pale.

"Look around for any-" the demon said, but was interrupted by a massive roar as one of the enormous devils looked straight at them.

It was the titan that the squad of array masters was heading toward. Did it want revenge because they stole its array?

A humanoid squad hurried over though, and they summoned a massive warrior in the sky with the help of a War Array, and the projection released a terrifying beam of energy that slammed into the chest of the titan.

But the air around the titan suddenly cracked as the devil shuddered, creating a shockwave that blew all the weaker warriors in the area far away. It also made a few of the soldiers managing the array lose their footing, which interrupted the War Array for long enough for the Titan to swing its massive hammer at them. The soldiers only managed to hastily erect a shield at the last second, saving themselves from being annihilated.

"Shit, those guys won't be able to defend for long," Ogras muttered.

"Hooded guys fleeing over there!" Zac said as he pointed in the distance in another direction.

It was a group that resembled the array masters they had killed just now, except they had no warbeast accompanying them. One of them was instead carrying a massive backpack, and six large spikes protruded out of it.

"It might be them," the demon muttered. "It's only..."

Zac understood what he was getting at. The group of array masters was running straight toward the backlines of the devil army. If they pursued then they would put themselves even deeper in enemy lines. There might not be another squad available to run interference in case they got targeted again.

"It's okay," Zac shrugged. "If worse comes to worst and it's the wrong target we'll simply have to fight our way back to our side. There's no way we'll be expected to fight those big things for more than a second or two."

"Fair enough," the demon nodded. "It's still only the 28th level, after all. It shouldn't be too convoluted. We have the core crystal, and those are the array flags. We'll snatch them and teleport out."

"Let's go," Zac said after looking back at the furious titan that was still being held back by the War Array.

The golden projection of the warrior was already starting to dim, meaning that the squad would probably only be able to keep the titan at bay for another 30 seconds or so. But that was enough for Zac and he grabbed Galau again, and the three created a straight line of carnage in their all-out pursuit.

One fractal blade after another carved a path through the devils as Zac kept swinging his axe. Ogras had already taken off his cast, and a twenty-meter long arm crushed any devil that came too close. Zac noted that the demons who Ogras killed oddly enough looked a bit paler after they got killed, like the hand was made out of bleach rather than shadows.

The array masters who carried the six flags soon noticed their approach, and they screeched as they quickly slammed down the six spikes into the ground and started to infuse energy into them. A group of devils also came forward to buy some time, each of them recently evolved judging by their auras.

But that wasn't enough to noticeably impede the trio, and they fell by the droves as Zac unleashed a barrage of fractal blades. Soon enough they were upon the array masters, only to be met with a wave of illusory flames the devils had managed to bring forth even without the array core.

Zac frowned and activated [Nature's Barrier] and infused it with the Dao of Sanctuary, creating a canopy to protect the three. But the flames passed straight through the leaves and fell onto their bodies.

"Netherblasted soulflames," Ogras growled as a condensed lance of shadows completely obliterated the torso of one of the array devils. "That hurt you scum."

Zac growled from the pain as well, but his soul was strong enough to handle something like this after being assaulted by the splinter for months. He immediately spread the Seed of Trees through his body as well to help douse the soul-eating flames, and he felt a soothing warmth almost immediately.

Since they didn't possess the array core the power of the flames was no doubt extremely weakened, and with one step with [Loamwalker] Zac was upon them with murder in his eyes. Space split apart as the remaining devils fell apart into neat chunks of flesh as [Verun's Bite] roared with glee, and Zac

started ripping the array flags out of the ground before the dead array masters even had time to fall apart.

Forcibly taking the flags out like that released another burst of voidflames straight into Zac's face, but he withstood the pain as he snatched them one by one.

"It's here," Ogras muttered, pointing to an array forming in blood from the fallen devils. "And just in time."

"Am I supposed to carry around these huge things?" Zac muttered as he had his arms full with the huge spikes.

"They are bound to someone here," Galau said. "But the connection will break when we leave this world which will allow you to stow them away. And I think we should hurry."

Zac looked back and saw that the massive titan was running toward them with surprising speed going by its bulky frame. A few warriors tried to intercept, but the massive hammer in its hands swung back and forth like a pendulum, turning devils and men alike into goop in its fury.

"Let's hope not all the floors are like this," Zac said as they stepped onto the teleportation array.

"Don't jinx it," Ogras sighed just as they were teleported away.