

The Fall 438

Chapter 438: Points

"Supremacy..." Zac mumbled with some helplessness.

At least there was no confusion about what needed to be done this time. It was a Battle Royale. It made Zac remember when he sat wounded and wrung out in the tunnels of his crystal mine, and the quest for the Fruit of Ascension suddenly popped up.

The system had told the inhabitants of the island to fight for supremacy back then as well, and what followed was a bloodbath. This time things were slightly fuzzy though. Was this really a last man standing scenario?

Thankfully it seemed like the system wasn't done, and a few more lines appeared in front of him.

[Defeating each contestant rewards 1 point, in addition to all accumulated points of the vanquished.]

[Trail ends when 10 contestants remain, or when no combat has taken place for 3 minutes. Avoiding battle for more than 5 minutes counts as forfeiture of climb.]

[Ladder will display the top ten contestants.]

Zac quickly looked around and noticed a huge screen appearing in the sky. It was currently completely blank, but it was no doubt the scoreboard the System mentioned.

At least the System wasn't so heartless that it would only let one person through. Ten spots being awarded wasn't too bad since he guessed there were roughly 200 platforms in the vast arena. That meant 5% of the people would pass. Those odds didn't seem too bad considering they were on the last level of the 7th floor, whose guardian would no doubt have been extremely strong.

The question now was what level of power was required to be considered the top 5% in a group like this. He felt pretty confident in himself compared to almost any F-Grade cultivator, but he also knew that he knew nothing of how things worked with B-Grade and higher forces.

Neither did Ogras nor anyone else in the sector it seemed, as the strongest forces were all C-Grade. Perhaps the strongest people would know more, but the things beyond C-Grade might as well be myths for people like him.

Zac immediately tried to figure out a strategy to last as long as possible. Best case scenario he avoided battle altogether as the others fought it out. He would then swoop in and defeat a few warriors and snatch their accumulated points.

But he knew that was probably a pipe dream. He had no ability in stealth, and most of these people probably had anti-stealth capabilities anyway. Besides, the system clearly disallowed such a tactic with its set of rules. Huddling in a corner might be seen as a sign of weakness as well, prompting him to get attacked.

Should he go the other way and blast his aura to the fullest, drowning his surroundings in his killing intent? No, something like that would probably backfire. They might consider him a raid boss and team up to take him out before turning on each other.

A thought suddenly struck him and he took out a couple of talismans and an Array Disk. He tried activating them one by one but he sighed in relief when none of them worked. Next he took out an amulet, a pretty weak defensive treasure he had snatched during the climb. The amulet immediately created a shimmering shield around him, though it was dimmer compared to the first time he tried it out.

It seemed that the System had enforced certain rules on the floor. Expendable treasures such as talismans, offensive items, and Array Disks had been completely disabled for the Battle Royale. However, real defensive treasures like his robes seemed to work, albeit in a reduced capacity.

Not being able to use any external items might be seen as a detriment, but for Zac that could only be considered a huge boon. He came from a newly integrated planet of a weak sector, and the things he could bring out would probably seem like a joke to most of these people.

Most scions of B-Grade clans would probably be able to beat him to death with their wallets alone, and even if the efficacy was lowered he would be in deep shit if someone took out a bunch of peak-grade arrays. He was pretty confident in the durability of his body, but even he wouldn't survive getting blasted by twenty [Void Balls].

This leveled the playing field somewhat at least and he took a few deep calming breaths as he looked around. All the platforms were full by this point, and the warriors inside essentially stood rooted to their spots as they waited for the timer to hit zero.

The array flashed faster and faster, and suddenly it was just gone, exposing himself and the other warriors. The whole area shuddered as hundreds of immense auras burst out, each one powerful enough to completely steamroll anyone on Earth.

Not even a second passed before blood was spilled, and Zac was already behind in the count before he had even jumped down from the platform. A few had taken the opportunity to launch quick strikes on their neighbors for early points, and the scoreboard had already filled up with ten names.

One warrior after another released their strongest skills and transformed, and everything from tempestuous storms of energy to awe-inspiring avatars started to take form across the arena.

However, one phenomenon reigned supreme, to the point that all battles ground to a halt. Zac was primed to meet any assault, but he couldn't stop looking at the spectacle on the other side of the arena as well.

It was as though a sun had appeared from nowhere as a colossal ball of primordial flames covered an area of hundreds of meters in each direction. Space itself seemed unable to withstand the heat as countless spatial tears were scorched open before they quickly mended again.

Zac had fought various flame-aspected warriors, but nothing he had seen had come close to the heat generated in that globe. The flames contained a boundless fury and scorching heat that threatened everyone in the arena, and Zac's Danger Sense screamed at him to never cross the woman who sat on top of the sun.

There was no doubt in his mind that the ball contained at least a medium Dao Fragment, but the terrifying fluctuations made Zac believe that the reality was likely far scarier. Perhaps you'd even need Peak Fragment to reach those levels of power.

The fiery globe was a stark contrast to the young woman who hovered above the sun, as her face was an ice-cold mask as she gazed down on the arena as a goddess looking down at her subjects. Zac couldn't be sure from the distance, but she seemed to be a human from what he could tell.

A gargantuan avatar suddenly appeared behind her, a six-winged humanoid who could either be a fallen angel or a demon. It looked like it was seated inside the ball of flames, but it was still only submerged to its navel due to its towering height.

The avatar formed an odd seal with its fingers which conjured six enormous fractal circles above his head. The sense of danger in Zac's mind surged, and he started backing away even if he was on the other side of the arena.

Six terrifying whirlwinds of purest flames rose out from the ball of flames and entered the fractals, imbuing them with their scorching heat. The next moment the whole arena was illuminated in a blaring light as each fractal launched a condensed pillar at an unfortunate cultivator who was too close to the sun.

Five of the unlucky targets were simply obliterated, the flames not even leaving their bones or treasures intact. Only one woman, a rugged beastkin woman wielding an odd kettle with incense, managed to survive by conjuring a massive beast avatar that managed to block the flames for a fraction of a second, which allowed her to move out of the way.

She was still grazed by the attack as it slammed into the ground, and she quickly took out a pill while she kept retreating with horror written all over her face. The beastkin only got a few steps though before she crumpled down on the ground as she started spewing grey clouds from her mouth. A second later she had turned into a bonfire as the flames had somehow burned her from inside.

The scene had completely subdued the whole arena. Just getting grazed by her attacks had been enough to get yourself killed, and she was still sitting on enough flames to drown out half the arena.

The flame goddess thankfully didn't seem inclined to push things any further for the moment and instead sat down on top of the ball of flames to spectate the battles. Zac had first thought that some people would call for teaming up against the monstrous powerhouse, but she was completely ignored as dozens of battles erupted as people increased their distance from the stationary sun.

Perhaps she only wanted to stake her position in the top ten, and no one was foolish enough to contend for the first position when you could fight for one of the other nine spots. Hopefully, she would only strike one unlucky person every three minutes to not get kicked out, and effortlessly pass the trial.

It was a humbling reminder that the sector he came from was just a backwater corner of the multiverse. He was probably the strongest F-Grade warrior there, but there was always a higher peak. He had no confidence in defeating that girl. He wasn't even sure he'd be able to handle one of her attacks in his human form.

His Undead form would perhaps be able to tank a few strikes, but defeating her in that form would be impossible. The vast power of the sun would melt his miasmic cage in seconds, and he would be turned into cinder before he would get close enough to hit her with an axe.

Was this the actual peak of the F-Grade, or were there even stronger people out there?

The flame girl was shockingly not the only warrior that made Zac leery, there were two more that he knew he would have to avoid if possible. Worse yet, half of the contenders were like him, holding back to observe the surroundings. There were no doubt a few more powerhouses hiding in the mix, waiting for the right opportunity to strike.

He had briefly entertained the notion of gaining the first spot as he waited for the arrays to deactivate, but now he was rather wondering if he'd even make it into the top ten.

The system wouldn't give the leaders an easy time either, as there was actually a picture attached next to their names and points so that anyone would know who they were. One person obviously wasn't prepared for that, as his face started to distort and change in an effort to circumvent the ladder. But the picture next to his name kept changing as well.

Zac had no time to worry about others though, as a sword tip pierced out of thin air, aimed straight at his heart. It contained an inexorable force, and it felt like the sword was a kilometer long slab of metal rather than just a meter. He immediately summoned [Nature's Barrier] and imbued it with the Dao of Trees to block the incoming strike, while also getting ready to activate his Dao of the Coffin in case it was needed.

A vast expanse of trees spread out around Zac as he activated [Hatchetman's Spirit] as well, but this time the trees found competition from massive fractal swords that materialized all around him before they stabbed into the ground. He felt he was no longer in his private grove, but rather in a contested forest full of wood and steel.

The large sword pillars would have to wait though, as the incoming strike was stronger than expected. One of the ropes on the divine tree from [Hatchetman's Spirit] snapped, providing him with another shimmering layer of defense.

Thankfully it seemed like his layers defenses enough to stop the attack even if it was impossible for him to imbue the nature-attuned skills with the Fragment of the Coffin. The dozens of Dao-Infused leaves didn't completely manage to impede the strike though, proving just how much power the stab had contained.

He had just activated the defensive barrier from [Hatchetman's Spirit] as an extra precaution since he felt that [Nature's barrier] should be enough to block an opening salvo. His defensive skill was based on his Endurance after all, and even if the attack was infused with a Dao Fragment it still had to contend with a Peak Dao Seed and over 1800 effective Endurance.

But the attack wasn't over it seemed. The huge swords around him started to hum like they were struck by a tuning fork and two swords emerged out of the closest sword pillars like the massive swords were portals to some other dimension.

It was at this time his opponent finally appeared as well, rushing out of another sword pillar ready to strike.

It was a thin humanoid with purple skin and golden eyes. His build was pretty much the same as a very lanky human with the exception that his arms seemed to have an extra joint and that a thick but short tail extended from his lower back.

"Sorry, about this. You seem nice fellow, but I decided to give this floor a try," the man said as the three additional swords plunged toward Zac, each from its own direction. "And I need every point I can get."

Zac could only smile wryly in response. It looked like information wasn't free after all.