

The Fall 447

Chapter 447: Fated

Danger sense erupted in Zac's mind the next moment, and he desperately swiveled [Everlasting] to block a strike coming from behind. A dark-green lance had appeared out of nowhere, aimed straight at Zac's core. Zac tried to dodge, but his bulky body wasn't quick enough and he barely managed to reposition himself before the lance slid right through his armor as though it was made of paper before continuing into his side.

Radiating pain spread throughout his body, and Zac felt like he was being bitten by a million fire ants. But the lance pushing straight through his body had one upside; the incursion leader was suddenly well within his range. The man was pretty quick, but he was nowhere near as fast as the assassin he had just fought.

Zac immediately let go of his shield as he grabbed onto the poison master before he could slink away again. His grip covered half the invader's torso, and there was no escaping now. The warrior seemed to realize the problem, and a green blade appeared in his hand as he tried to cut Zac's arm off with one swift motion.

A black shield appeared around Zac's arm as he hurriedly threw out a talisman from his Spatial Ring. It was something he had gotten from the undead level, a defensive treasure that could be used almost instantly. It wasn't strong enough to completely block out the strike, but it absorbed enough momentum for the Fragment of the Coffin along with his conjured armor to block out the rest.

Wet crunching sounds emerged from the poison master's body as Zac's grip closed like a vise. The man started wailing in pain as he desperately tried to morph away, but Zac was flooding the guy with his corrosive Dao, making it impossible to change his form.

However, the man seemed completely unwilling to give in even when half his torso was crushed, and a storm of daggers rushed toward them both in an attempt at mutual destruction. Zac was forced to quickly cut the man in two to finally sense a burst of energy enter his body as the flying daggers lost their power and fell down on the ground.

The invasion leader had almost been as durable as himself, launching destructive strikes even though half his body was crippled. Perhaps he was just like Alea, forced to focus on Vitality to counteract the effects of the poisons he used.

Zac felt as though both his body and mind were on fire from the poison, but he still released the cage of [Profane Seal]. The fighting between both sides had mostly subsided, and they gapingly looked on as the massive form of Zac walked forward, holding the crushed incursion leader like a ragdoll in his almost grotesquely large hand.

"This invasion is over. Return or die," Zac said to the humans, his gravelly voice sending shivers down the spines of the listeners.

Seeing that most of the humans immediately fled toward the incursion pillar he turned to the massive trolls. They hesitantly looked at Zac, unsure whether he was an ally or just a bloodthirsty lunatic.

“Do you understand my words now?” Zac simply asked as he forcibly tried to quell the storm raging in his mind.

“We understand, Warmaster,” one of the trolls said as he stepped forward. “Why did you help us?”

“I am following a prophecy that took me to your world. I am looking for the Hayner Clan,” Zac said.

Following a prophecy was an excuse that Ogras had used multiple times when searching for information upon arriving at new levels. It didn't really explain why they were there, and neither did it divulge whether you were an ally or a foe. Furthermore, a lot of people read into it whatever fit their point of view, which made them accidentally divulge some extra information.

“The Hayner Clan?” the troll mumbled with a frown. “Are they the cause of this cataclysm?”

“They have something in their possession that should not exist on this planet,” Zac said, neither confirming nor denying the troll's question.

“So it is them,” the troll growled. “Delving into the taboo. They pretended to be our saviors bringing words of warning, but they were actually the harbingers of our doom.”

It turned out that the Hayner Clan was an ancient clan full of sages who delved into the mysteries of the heavens. They had warned the forces of this world that a great war was coming, that invaders would come to disrupt their way of life. It had allowed the forces to ready themselves for war, but it had also inadvertently helped Zac gain an excuse for why he was looking for them.

However, a frown quickly formed beneath Zac's helmet while listening as it quickly became apparent that the family focused on the Dao of Karma, just like Abbot Everlasting Peace. Fighting those kinds of people was notoriously annoying since they were often able to anticipate your next move.

Did the Hayner Clan already know they were targeted by him? Perhaps they had even gone underground the moment he arrived, which would make Zac's mission even harder to complete.

He had already confirmed that the incursion leader wasn't the guardian of the level. No Teleportation Array had appeared when he killed the poison master, and he was pretty sure by now that he would have to actually find the Hayner Clan to advance to the next floor. After asking about the general state of the world and getting a decent map of the area Zac left the trolls to deal with the aftermath of the incursion.

However, Zac only ran for twenty minutes before he stopped and took out another healing treasure along with some general antidote pills. With the number of pills he had eaten over the last hour the effect was drastically reduced, but he needed to do something about the poison rampaging through his body.

It had been a struggle to just stand upright and talk with the trolls. They were very congenial after he had killed the Incursion leader, even calling him Warmaster, but that friendliness might have taken a sharp turn if they found out he was in an extremely wounded state. Dealing with poison was his strong suit, but the wounds had tacked up to an almost unmanageable state by now.

He knew he was running out of time to reach the top of the 8th floor, but he still needed to take a moment to rest. At least the last level had finished extremely quickly which saved him a few hours, even

though the final levels of each floor usually were pretty quick to deal with. It wouldn't be the end of the world if he spent a couple of hours healing up from the aftermath.

Taking the opportunity of the downtime Zac first looked inward, checking out his new and improved Specialty Core. Its size and coloring were pretty much the same, but the density of fractals covering its surface was on a whole new level. The inscriptions were so fine that he couldn't discern them all with his spiritual vision.

There was also an indefinable upgrade in the quality of the Duplicity Core. It almost felt like it had been a cheap plastic ball before, but it was now upgraded to solid metal. The quality and composition were essentially improved. However, Zac quickly started to feel some confusion as he tried to understand the changes the upgrade had brought.

The reason was simple; there were none. The line in his status screen had been updated to say [E] Duplicity, but that was about it. It didn't provide any more attributes, and there was nothing else that seemed to have changed.

It was a pretty big disappointment, as it currently awarded 5% Strength and 5% Endurance, based on the two main attributes of his classes. Zac thought that those boosts might increase from the upgrade, which was another reason he opted to take the Specialty Core upgrade as an award. If his boost went from 5% to 10%, then his Strength would have passed 1000 by now. But it seemed like that wasn't meant to be.

However, it wasn't a complete loss. He had only seen those things as a bonus if he got them. The main point was that he would be able to evolve his two classes without having to worry whether his Specialty Core would be able to keep up. Besides, Yrial seemed to indicate that the speed of his transformation should improve as the Core evolved. He didn't dare to try it out right now as he was both poisoned and wounded though, and his Draugr form was better at enduring such a state.

Not gaining any boost to his Strength was disappointing, but he had gotten his hands on another Peak Attribute fruit which would allow him to almost reach his goal. As long as a Medium Fragment increased the boost to All Attributes he would breach 1000 Strength no matter which of the three Fragments he managed to upgrade from the Tower Apparition.

As for whether he would manage to upgrade his Dao from the Apparition, he felt it almost was a given by now. He had reached the 8th floor, something that only happened once every few millennia. The strength of the apparition he would summon should be on a completely different tier compared to those he had witnessed before, and the effect was reportedly boosted significantly when you were the one who conjured it.

After having rested up for another hour he felt strong enough that he didn't need to solely focus on recuperation. Most of the poison had already been converted to energy, with just a few Dao-empowered remnants lingering on. Those remnants would take a while longer to grind down, but they weren't a threat to him at all.

Seeing the situation stabilized he first took out the Peak Attribute fruit and ate it. A warmth spread through his body, and he quickly checked the status screen for the result. A quick mental calculation let

him know that he had gained 8 to All Attributes, which would have to be considered a pretty good result.

However, his Strength had only gained 7 points, pushing his total to 992. It was only one point less than the other attributes, but it proved a somewhat disappointing fact; he had hit the cap for how much Strength he could gain by eating treasures. Adding the fruits from the hunt he had gained a total of 25 points in Strength before he hit the limit.

An attribute limit of twenty-five was as good as it got in the F-grade as far as Zac could tell, where most people were only able to gain 15-20 points from Attribute Fruits. However, he had held out some unspoken hope that his odd constitution would also apply to this situation, where his limits were a lot higher compared to normal. But it looked like his body had to follow the same rules as everyone else.

But there were not only bad news waiting after he looked through his status screen. His Luck had shot up to 257, and it had provided a title just like he had hoped.

[Fated: Gain 250 Luck at F-Grade Reward: Effect of Luck +5%]

It wasn't anything special truthfully, but Zac guessed it was fair enough. His luck was so high from having gained so many titles, and if the System kept giving titles for those kinds of accomplishments it would essentially mean he was getting rewarded for getting rewarded. Besides, even if the boost was pretty small it was still a High-Tiered Title that boosted Luck. Such a thing was extremely hard to come by.

Zac closed the screen and turned his attentions to the two Cosmos Sacks and the Spatial Ring he had gained during the last level. He couldn't help but smile in anticipation as he scanned the content of the first pouch, wondering what kind of treasures the elites of the Multiverse would carry around.

A blank look of confusion spread across his face though as he first scanned the swordsman's sack. Zac couldn't figure out what was going on. He would have expected a cosmos Sack from someone like that to be filled to the brim with all kinds of mysterious items, but there was even less inside than his own Cosmos Sack.

The first thing he noticed was one of the golden swords. It was one of the three that the lanky humanoid had controlled with his mind and that had kept harassing him throughout the fight. But he couldn't find the other three swords he used even after scanning the contents multiple times. Had the System simply snatched a part of the losers' treasures at random as they left the Tower? Because that was what it looked like after going through the contents.

He did however spot the old sword in its tattered scabbard. It was something that had piqued Zac's interest due to its dangerous aura, and Zac curiously took it out from the Sack. Upon looking at it from such close proximity it felt like the sword was something that had been left to rot in some storehouse for millennia before being picked up. The leather scabbard was extremely faded and dried out, and it looked like a strong wind would turn it to dust.

However, his mind started to scream of danger the moment he gripped the hilt, and a furious presence suddenly urged him to draw the sword and paint the world red. Zac groaned and quickly threw the sword to the ground, but it took him over ten minutes to regain his composure. The presence had awakened the [Splinter of Oblivion] inside its cage, and it furiously railed against the miasmic fractals.

It felt like when he had been possessed by the cursed ghosts during the hunt, as violent impulses had tried to take over his mind. Zac looked at the old sword with some lingering fear, unsure what he was dealing with.

Was it a Tool Spirit that had gone insane?