

## The Fall 468

### Chapter 468: Restrained

Zac realized that breaking through the thick shield would be difficult from the outside, but the wooden hand was already presiding above the army outside of the shield. He needed to create an opportunity to let the punishment descend, which would hopefully ruin the array as well. He had a few options, but he ultimately chose to utilize one of the rings on his finger, which was another offensive treasure from the mentalist.

He hoped that the mental attack would be able to breach the Six Direction's shield, as it seemed physical in nature. It was unlikely they had prepared mental defenses after his display upon entering the tower, after all. The ring on his finger cracked and Zac breathed out in relief when he saw the almost imperceptible wave slip through minute cracks between the six fractals and descend on the army.

Another burst of Cosmic Energy entered Zac's body as several cultivators instantly got their souls crushed, and many of the skills blocking [Nature's Punishment] failed as warriors were forced to withstand a massive trauma to their souls. It seemed as though the group of five in the front were protected by some unknown means though, and they didn't even flinch as the wave passed them by.

The offensive treasure had fulfilled its purpose as the avatars that blocked [Nature's Punishment] lost their vigor in an instant, and a massive branch finally managed to emerge from the emerald fractal in the sky. Chaotic storms of Cosmic Energy caused massive waves in the sky as warriors threw out defensive treasures and all sorts of talismans as a last-ditch effort, but everything was pushed aside or crushed as the massive branch descended.

Only at the last moment was the wooden punishment stopped by a prismatic shield that reminded Zac of a soap bubble. Zac kept infusing the skill with more and more power though, and he felt like he was just missing a little bit to break the last line of defenses. One cultivator after another fell beneath the shield as they were overtaxed by the pressure, but the replacements were seemingly endless.

Zac suddenly had an idea and he took out an impressive-looking talisman from his Spatial Ring and threw it toward the army with a roar. The eyes of quite a few warriors widened in alarm, and they quickly refocused their efforts to defend their minds from yet another concussive wave. The army had already been beset by two peak-grade soul-harming arrays, and many were probably hanging on by a thread.

However, no mental attack emerged as the talisman cracked in front of the prismatic shield. Instead, a weak shield sprung up and covered a patch of dirt.

The prismatic shield burst apart the next moment, and the wooden finger headed right toward the army with world-ending force. The branch slammed into the large square cobblestones of the square like the finger of an angry god and the whole area shook and heaved as Zac was inundated in a massive amount of Cosmic Energy. At least 50 people had died from the initial attack, and even more sported gristly wound from the shockwave.

However, the attack wasn't over just yet.

Hundreds of sharp branches grew out of the tree and stabbed everything in its surroundings, causing another wave of carnage. It was just like when the spectral chains of [Profane Seal] targeted the living inside its cage, and desolate cries echoed across the core area of Base Town as one cultivator after another was impaled.

Only then did the emerald array in the air dissipate while Zac lost his mental connection to the tree. It remained on the square though, its branches filled with the unmoving bodies of dozens of fallen warriors. It had turned into a twisted monument drenched in the blood of the elites of the sector, and hopefully it would serve as a reminder to choose life over wealth for anyone who had any ideas on Zac.

Unfortunately, it seemed as though the group maintaining the two powerful arrays around him had come prepared, and another shield protected them from the fall-out from [Nature's Punishment] as they prepared their next moves. It was becoming increasingly apparent that this group of five was the largest threat unless there were even stronger people lying in wait in one of the palaces that lined the square.

"Heaven's Punishment!" "Hell Suppression!" two more cultivators shouted in unison as Zac scrambled for a way to break the stalemate, leaving only the young man in the middle of the group of five unoccupied.

A vast array in an unblemished white appeared in the sky, and it felt like his body was being slowly being ground to dust just by being covered in its lights. Zac wanted to get out the way, but a pitch-black array suddenly covered the ground he stood on, and he helplessly fell down onto the cobblestones from an immense pressure.

Zac's whole body was immobilized by an almost unbearable weight, and the whole square around him cracked even though it was made from some mysterious material that didn't even scar until he brought out [Nature's Punishment]. The four arrays were no doubt at the absolute peak of what could be brought to the Base down, and they had even formed a system to create an even stronger effect.

Just moving his arms was a struggle, and Zac started to worry for the first time as he saw the leader of the group prepare what would no doubt be the finale. He considered activating another defensive treasure pre-emptively, but he quickly decided against it. He was running low on Cosmic Energy by this point, and each activation took a good chunk of his reserves. He'd only activate another talisman if he saw a lethal attack coming.

He was also out of offensive treasures, leaving him unable to deal with any of the four arrays restricting him. He was almost out of options, and he knew he would have to pay a price to deal with this situation. However, he was unwilling to keep his head bowed down to some warriors relying on superior numbers.

He remembered the feelings of irreconciliation of the general in his vision; the frustration of being bested not by skills or hard work, but by being overwhelmed by sheer numbers. He would have done well to remember that general's painful lesson, but he had walked into this fight with a feeling of superiority, that numbers were irrelevant to his superior might.

But he had been met with ingenious tactics and boundless ferocity, proving that not even someone who had stood shoulder to shoulder with the elites of the multiverse was safe. Death could come at any time, from the most unlikely of perpetrators.

Veins wiggled beneath his skin across his body as he forced himself back on his knees. The pressure was terrifying, but he was slowly adapting to it with the help of his insights into the Dao of Heaviness. Thin layers of skin were peeling off from his face and arms before rising toward the array above like he was spontaneously falling apart, but he ignored the pain as his wild eyes were trained at the group of warriors.

The whole shield shuddered as Zac flashed forward and cut into it with [Verun's Bite], the weapon radiating sanguine light that painted the group red. The woman controlling the array paled from the backlash, forced to take a step back. It did hold against his assault though, but Zac was just getting started.

Power and rage coursed through his veins as he slammed one time after another, each strike containing enough force to split mountains. His whole body creaked and groaned from the pressure and wounds were opening up from just moving about, but he kept swinging his axe with relentless ferocity.

The woman controlling the Six Directions array was empowered by a retinue running a War Array, but the supportive cultivators fell down with bleeding orifices as they were being overtaxed. Cracks started spreading across the shimmering wall, and just a bit would be enough to break through and reach these people.

As long as he got into melee range things would be over, as no one here was his match in such close proximity.

Zac's eyes were filled with blood from the immense pressure from the combination of the suppressive array and [Hatchetman's Rage], but the leader of the five looked into his with equanimity as he took out a large box and pointed it toward Zac. Zac's danger sense screamed for him to move, but he first sent a mental command into his axe.

A swirl of mysterious energies slipped through the cracks Zac had caused in the shield, and the primordial beast appeared in all its glory a second later. Zac wasn't the only one who had undergone a drastic change during the climb, Verun had gotten received its own share of opportunities.

The beast was actually a bit smaller compared to before, but it was more condensed, more corporeal, compared to before. It was still five meters long and reached almost three meters into the air, making it a massive beast compared to anything that had lived on Earth at least. Its huge maw with its grisly fangs looked the same as before, but the number of eyes had actually increased on its head.

It now had two sets of eyes, all four of them seemingly moving independent of each other as they looked for targets. Swirls of blood also slowly rotated around its paws, and Zac sensed a hint of the dragon's primordial aura from the Tool Spirit. It released an earthshattering roar after having finally appeared after so long, and it immediately pounced on the cultivators on the square.

Zac had initially wanted to force his way out of the shield, but he knew enough to listen to his danger sense. So he jumped back to avoid whatever the leader had planned. He didn't know what was inside that box, but it felt extremely dangerous, even to him.

Being forced to back off at this critical juncture was a disappointment, but the shield was seriously weakened and its controller seemed to be running out of steam. Verun was also causing mass panic among the cultivators outside, and together with the mass casualties from [Nature's Punishment] he

pretty much only had the five elites and their retinues to worry about. And he still had something that could easily turn the tides.

Zac was still a bit hesitant though as he took out the rusty sword from his Spatial Ring.

However, he had witnessed the power of the sinister weapon himself during the Battle of Fates. That swordsman had been able to utterly destroy [Nature's Punishment] with the help of this cursed weapon, and if Zac hadn't deactivated his skill in time he might even have lost his hand. It was his best option to end things in one go, especially now that the rabble had been mostly routed with the help of the massive tree's descent.

Besides, he didn't want to waste any more of the mentalist's jewelry. He would have wasted too many treasures before even returning to earth if he continued like this, and those things might be crucial in the upcoming fights against the Dominators. Zac gripped the dried-out leather of the hilt, and his wounds opened all over his arm as he forcibly started dragging it out of its scabbard.

Blood fell on the ground like rain, and Zac roared into the sky as a storm of voices entered his mind. Odd veins started traveling up his arm from his sword as well, like the weapon was trying to fuse with his body. Even the exhausted remnants shuddered from the intrusion into his mind, but they weren't in any condition to affect the course of events.

Zac suppressed the voices with everything he got as he strained to finish the attack quicker.

It almost felt like he was trying to complete the third swing of [Deforestation] by unsheathing the blade, and a huge chunk of his remaining Cosmic Energy was swallowed by the sword in an instant. But Zac didn't care as he felt that a horrible power was brewing within the sword, and his arm bulged as he finally managed to drag out the reluctant weapon before the veins could spread above his elbow.

A piercing wail echoed across the square and Zac's vision doubled from the mental shock, but he still swung the weapon in a wide arc toward the cultivators running the arrays. He wasn't sure whether there was a trick to using the weapon, so he tried to mimic the form of the swordsman as best as he could remember.

The familiar white half-moon thankfully appeared, but it was covered in the same red pulsating veins as those snaking up along his arm. The strike had felt like a pure sword-strike when the lanky swordsman used the weapon back on the 7th floor, but now it really felt like something an unorthodox cultivator would use. It hadn't weakened the power of the strike though, but rather the opposite.

Zac moved his mental energy and started infusing the blade with the Fragment of the Axe for good measure. Zac got a rabid pushback from the weapon, but Zac growled and crammed it in, no matter what the crazy voices were screaming. The blade shuddered and a few cracks appeared, but it quickly mended and continued to expand as it picked up more and more speed as it rushed toward the shield, now empowered with Zac's most destructive Dao.

It was like the edge was tapping an unceasing fount of power, and was soon so large that the whole army would be hit if it managed to break out from its cage. Most of the surviving warriors had already started running for their lives after realizing their attacks passed straight through Verun's body, and seeing the corrupted half-moon broke the will of the few remaining cultivators hoping to fish in muddy waters.

Only the five cultivators stood their ground, and they seemed to have some confidence in the layers of restrictions they had superimposed on the square.

"Breath of Cosmos!" the leader shouted, and he finally opened the box that he had held in his arms until now.

A cloud of stardust emerged from the chest, and it drifted straight through the shield and toward the incoming attack. The whole blade was soon covered in a glistening cloud, and it looked like a beautiful nebula. The aura of madness that the half-moon emitted was completely swallowed by the dust, and Zac sensed that the cloud was slowly grinding it down.

However, Zac's attack pushed forward with undeniable intractability, and it was like the mysterious cloud that had caused such a strong reaction in Zac's mind only managed to nip at its heels. The leader looked extremely surprised at the turn of events before some worry started to show on his face.

"Release your greatest attacks!" the leader shouted, as Cosmic Energy started to surge around his body.

"This is not what we agreed upon!" another of the five retorted. "You guaranteed that the [Five Dimensional Seal] would restrain him! Does this look restrained to you?!"