

The Fall 469

Chapter 469: Clashing Fates

The man who had spoken up wasn't the only one who looked at the leader with fear-induced anger, but another two of them seemed to be ready to leave then and there.

"I'll increase the compensation. Besides, he is still restrained even if he's not incapacitated. We just need to break this attack and we'll have won," the man said.

The man looked unreconciled but he still complied, and he took out a green finger from his Spatial Tool and swallowed it. The next moment he swelled over five times in size while an enormous cauldron appeared behind him, and he launched a punch that shuddered with power toward Zac. The attack caused a cascading series of putrid explosions to rock the area, and a few unlucky cultivators who had been maimed from the fight earlier were consumed as well, turning into brittle skeletons in an instant.

The four elites followed suit, and all of them either transformed from an ultimate skill or caused an avatar to appear behind their backs. One of them seemed to be a lightning cultivator, and another summoned a beast that looked even more dangerous than Verun. The Tool Spirit roared in defiance, but it still stayed away from the five due to Zac's command and kept routing the stragglers.

Zac was a bit out of it from the increasingly intrusive screams emerging from the tattered sword, but he could still hear their discussion. He was initially confused just who these five people were, as they were of mixed races and dressed completely differently. It didn't seem like they belonged to the same force, and this notion was only reinforced when they released their ultimate skills.

From the conversation, it looked like a group of elites had decided to band together in order to incapacitate him. Zac guessed they had kept their aces in hopes that they would be able to snatch the final prize the moment he was lying within the arrays unable to even lift a finger.

The two sides clashed, and it felt like the world had frozen before cataclysmic waves of attuned energies spread in all directions, drowning the whole square in color. There was a very clear divide in the sky, with Zac's side being white with red streaks, and the other half being a mix of colors representing the five elites.

It looked like there was a stalemate taking place, but Zac knew things weren't that simple. His attack was one single wave of unadulterated power, whereas the other side was a mostly disjointed mix. It was only a matter of time before his attack would break through at which point things would go south very quickly for his enemies.

The leader of the group seemed to have understood what was going going to happen as well, and he immediately took action. However, he neither tried another counter nor tried to run away, but he rather slapped a talisman onto the back of the woman next to him, the cultivator responsible for the 'Six Directions Array'.

She disappeared in a puff, leaving the others flabbergasted.

Their side had already been on the losing end of the confrontation, and they had suddenly lost a fifth of their power along with the powerful shield protecting them. The four remaining attacks crumbled in an instant, and the half-moon seized the opportunity pushed forward with furious momentum.

One of the masters tried to run, but it seemed as though he was bogged down in a quagmire. He released a soundless scream as the half-moon bisected him, but Zac's brows furrowed when he saw that the blade actually seemed to swallow the man. The red veins crept out from the edge and latched onto the cultivator, and his body was drained in an instant.

Most of the retinues that infused the five through War Arrays met the same fate, and only the leader managed to hold on by expending a series of defensive treasures. Zac finally couldn't take the strain from holding the sword any longer, and he immediately put away the thing, causing the half-moon to disappear after releasing a wail of discontent.

Zac flashed forward the next moment and he activated the first fractal of [Verun's Bite] again, intending to end things then and there. The mob of cultivators was mostly dealt with, but as long as the man who had organized the assault was alive he wouldn't feel safe. He was in front of the leader in an instant, and his axe shone with a sanguine glow as it fell toward his head.

However, before Zac's attack had a chance to connect a necklace lit around the man up, and Zac felt an all-consuming pain as the defensive charge of [Hatchetman's Spirit] crumbled in an instant. His chest had been turned into a bloody mess yet again, and it was almost as bad as yesterday when he got punched by the Technocrat Captain.

Thankfully Zac still possessed the final energies that the Shard of Creation had released during its rampage, and he quickly urged it to reform his torso before he passed out. It almost looked like time went in reverse as his body reformed in an instant, but the fact that his robes were broken and tattered was proof that he had been at death's door just a second ago.

The richly dressed youth gaped in shock and dismay as Zac's axe bit into his body. The richly decked man tried to push the axehead out of his body, but Zac utterly overpowered him as he released a storm of rampant energies that turned the man's insides into a mess.

He somehow managed to stay alive, and their eyes met as the man clung to life.

"I'm sorry. You needed to die for my dream to come true. My ending is well deserved," the cultivator weakly smiled before his volume rose to be heard across the square. "I risked everything for power, but I failed. My ending has no relation with my clan."

Zac didn't say anything, and the man died a just a few seconds later. A lot of murmurs erupted from the cultivators who had spectated the battle from a safe distance, and a lot of people seemed to be recording the events into information crystals.

Being recorded was pretty much expected, so he didn't care, but he rather readied his still bloody axe for any follow-up attacks. As expected, his mind suddenly felt a pang of danger, and he quickly turned around as [Everlasting] appeared on his arm.

However, the assassin who had wanted to take advantage of the moment Zac let his guard down found himself impaled on a black spear as Ogras appeared out of his shadows. A burst of shadows ripped the man to pieces, and the demon walked up next to Zac as his face dripped with blood.

"It's over!" the demon shouted. "The quest is over, and Lord Piker has withstood the Trial of the Ruthless Heavens. We understand the allure of the reward and the effect of the Apparition, so we'll let

all enmities stay in behind and dissipate in Base Town as we leave. But any further attempts on our lives here or out in the open world will be met with a vengeance of extreme proportions. If not today then later.”

A snort escaped from Zac’s nose even if he understood the severity of the situation. It was just like Ogras, appearing the last moment looking like a heroic defender of justice with his spear pointed at the skies. Zac knew full well that the demon was nowhere near as confident as he wanted to appear, but it was for the best that Ogras dealt with the fallout.

Zac had immediately understood what Ogras was doing. He was trying to make minimize potential threats that could crop up in the future. They already had the Zethaya, Tsarun Clan, and The Great Redeemer to worry about, and causing a grudge with dozens of more families would neither do him nor Earth any good.

He could only hope that the forces of the sector would take the death of their scions with stride. A few people dying should barely be noticeable for these huge forces as thousands died every day in their struggle to become stronger. Such was the life of a cultivator.

If that wasn’t enough the various forces still might on his good due to worry about what he might become in the future. He had reached the 9th floor, something that only had happened once in recent memory, which should be a huge indicator of great potential for the people in this sector.

Thankfully it looked like no one wanted to fight any longer. Perhaps it was because the quest had ended, or perhaps it was because he was still essentially unscathed while the bodies of his enemies littered the whole square. The corpse-tree rising almost fifty meters into the air was also a poignant warning to anyone arriving late.

It was a relief, as he was currently pretty exhausted. Along with the backlash from activating [Hatchetman's Rage] he wouldn't even be able to muster half his power right now. But there was one thing that cut through the fatigue; greed. Just as there were bodies strewn everywhere across the field, so were there Spirit Tools and Cosmos Sacks.

His eyes turned to the man lying in front of him, the presumptive leader of the other side. He walked over toward the corpse and bent down to take the Spatial Ring on his finger. However, he stopped when he saw a man from the sidelines take a few steps toward him.

“Ah, Lord Piker, I mean no disrespect. But you might not want to take that man’s possessions,” a man hesitantly spoke up from the distance. “That is Yeorav Dravorak, of the Dravorak Dynasty. You might want to let them take his body and belongings back.”

Zac looked down at the body in front of him without a change in expression, but some waves still rose in his heart. Was this the brother of Reoluv, the man whose Tower Apparition had given him the Fragment of the Coffin, and the greatest Genius in the sector for thousands of years? And more importantly, the Dravorak Dynasty was a peak force in the sector. How would they respond to one of their princes dying?

Was this why the man had spoken up right before his death?

But at the same time, wasn't it too late by now for a show of respect? If the Dravorak wanted revenge, would him giving back the man's body make any difference? If this had been inside The tower or in the

wild, then Zac would definitely have looted the body before destroying it, but this had taken place in front of hundreds of people.

He wasn't sure what the custom was regarding this, and he glanced at the demon for assistance.

"The young Prince was an honorable man, facing his fate with equanimity," Ogras said. "His companions can claim him and his belongings. However, that only goes for the young prince. The rest bet their lives for power and wealth, and their possessions are Lord Piker's rightful claim for standing victorious. Everyone is free to claim the bodies of the deceased though, to give them their final rites."

Zac glanced at the expressions of those standing in the distance, and from the looks of it the demon's way of dealing with things wasn't anything uncommon. However, his eyes widened when he saw the woman who he had just fought return. Her eyes were bloodshot as she looked down at Yeroluv Dravorak, before her eyes moved to meet Zac's.

Zac felt the demon next to him tense up, gearing up for a battle, but Zac stopped him with a shake of his head.

"I am sorry. I—" she said before she looked down again with a shake of her head. "I am sorry."

She bent down and gingerly picked up the body of Yeorav before she slowly walked away from the square with the man in her arms. Zac's eyes followed the woman's lonely back as she carried the body to the edge of the square before she squatted down. It didn't look like she was planning on avenging him or anything, but rather that she seemed at a loss of what to do next.

Zac only shook his head with some heaviness.

It sounded like that man had desperately needed to get the reward for taking him out, to the point that he had been willing to die for it. That didn't really make him evil though, but rather someone out of options. Zac knew the feeling all too well, having been forced to make decisions that went against his conscience to protect those around him.

Ogras would probably have killed the lover as well if they hadn't been inside the Base Town where his actions might have triggered another quest, but Zac had no such intentions. It might be akin to releasing a wolf back into the forest, but what trouble could she possibly cause compared to Yeorav's family?

Zac didn't even have the energy to start speculating the aftermath of killing a scion of the Dravorak Dynasty, and instead focused on the task at hand.

"I am Zac Piker, and I am not connected to any force," Zac said with a hoarse but carrying voice.

He had long considered what he should say if he ever got to this point, and he was glad to see the eyes light up among many of the scions.

"There is a man calling himself The Great Redeemer is heading for my planet, intent on sacrificing everyone on it for an evil ritual. I believe he is currently a Peak D-Grade Warrior, and he has some knowledge of the Dao of Karma, but that's all I know," Zac continued.

This was the plan. He'd simply lay the cards on the table. He had no bargaining skills, and his time was limited, so he wanted to create a sense of urgency. There should be a lot of C-Grade forces interested in making a connection with him, and everyone would want to be the first to tie him to their chariot.

The scions looked a bit confused about the sudden change in topic, but a few eyes lit up in comprehension as they realized what was going on.

"I come from a weak recently integrated planet, and no one will be able to stop him. Taking care of a D-Grade Hegemon would be a small task for many of your ancestors, but it would be a favor I would forever remember. I am wi-" Zac said, but he was interrupted by a man who had just walked out of one of the palaces.

"Wait! I know that man!" the youth said with surprise. "He's the excommunicated son of the Heliophos Clan! They have been looking for him for tens of thousands of years!"

Zac's eyes lit up when he heard the news. Things would only become easier if the man was actually a fugitive. Perhaps he could even count on this Heliophos Clan clan to deal with the problem for him.

But the drastic change in expression among the people quickly doused Zac's excitement.