

The Fall 475

Chapter 475: Trapped

Zac rushed out of the meeting room and found the demon sitting in the lobby downstairs, surrounded by a handful of scions. Ogras looked up and immediately spotted something was wrong with his expression and flashed over.

"The town is being attacked," Zac simply said with a low voice. "I got a prompt by the System."

"What?!" the demon said with surprise. "Who would be able to attack the island?"

"I'll go deal with it immediately," Zac said. "It doesn't look like we'll be able to get any force to help us out against that guy anyway."

"No," Ogras said with a shake of his head. "I asked around. It seems a few C-Grade forces in the sector have gone from rulers of their areas to beggars after having crossed that Clan. One weird calamity after another befell their factions until nothing was left. They are definitely not some benign monks, and no one wants to be the next one to fall."

"You can stay behind a bit longer while I deal with this," Zac said after thinking it over. "I got something that will be able to see karma threads at least. See if you can find anything else that can help us hide our planet better, like arrays or obscuring treasures."

"I'll make some inquiries. Many still want to make a connection to us even if they will stay out of the way of the Heliophos Clan," the demon said. "I'm sure I can squeeze all kinds of good things out of the people here. There might be something useful in the sacks I looted as well, I haven't had a chance to go through them yet."

"Might as well make the most of the situation," Zac sighed. "I've already asked Boje Zethaya, but see if you can find any soul healing treasures. My soul cracked and I was forced to use the treasure during the climb and I don't have anything to heal Alea now. And get some materials for upgrading weapons as well."

The demon looked shocked, before he wryly looked at the people around.

"I'll ask, but if the Zethaya Descendant can't find anything I doubt I will fare any better," Ogras said. "But the girl is strong and we still have time. We need to focus on that old bastard coming for us. I'll see what solutions there are."

"Good. I got a token from Boje anyway, so we can always send someone over for a healing pill," Zac agreed as he took out the Tower Token. "When will you come back?"

"I'll sort things out quickly before returning as well," Ogras said after some thought. "Give me an hour or so."

Zac only nodded and cracked his token, and ten seconds later he was back on earth.

It almost felt surreal to be back in his secluded courtyard after moving through dozens of worlds that might have either been real or imaginary. The experiences over the past 100 days had been life-changing. Some parts had far exceeded his expectations, but for other things he had come up short.

The increase to his power compared to when he left Earth just 10 days ago was almost incalculable, yet he had still failed in either getting a real solution in the fight against The Great Redeemer or a cure for Alea. It wasn't all hopeless though, as Ogras might be able to come back with something that would help them shroud Earth from any karmic trails.

But there was no time to rest. He was still not completely recuperated from the showdown outside the Tower of Eternity, but he had thankfully relied heavily on his accumulated treasures to tide that tribulation. It left him with a decent amount of Cosmic Energy to spare, though the side-effects of [Hatchetman's Rage] were still there to a certain degree.

There were no obvious sounds of battle that he could hear, so he immediately rushed toward his Nexus Node. His first instinct was that someone might be trying to tamper with his private Node while he was away, like a spy trying to snatch his lordship from under his nose. But the house with the node was empty, and it didn't look like anyone had messed with it either.

Zac quickly walked out of the building and was about to head toward the town, when a shocking explosion erupted to the south. Trees were almost flattened to the ground and Zac felt the shockwave deep into his bones even though the explosion came from hundreds of meters away. There was only one thing in that direction; the shipyard.

"The creators?" Zac muttered with confusion before he flashed away.

A massive plume of flames rose to the sky the moment he passed the final layer of trees, and Zac was forced to cover his face from the intense light. The explosion earlier must have taken place somewhere out on the water, but Zac could feel the heat all the way from where he stood.

Zac was about to rush toward the Creator Offices, but he noticed that a familiar figure had appeared in front of him without him noticing. It was Rahm, the Creator Liaison.

"Lord Atwood, it has been a while. I hope you are well?" the stoic Creator said, seemingly unperturbed by the fact that the whole area had been turned into a blazing inferno.

"I'm fine," Zac said. "More importantly, what is going on? Are there attackers on the island? Or is this an experiment?"

"It is not an experiment, unfortunately," Rahm said. "It would appear that you are being invaded. Multiple large ships have breached your shores, and there have been sounds of conflict for a while now. The explosion just now was one of the ships trying to breach our arrays."

"Do you need assistance?" Zac asked.

"No," a booming voice echoed as the familiar spider-golem emerged from the offices. "It's so rare I get to see some action, and I hold no love for neither the fanatics nor the unliving. There is no way these children will be able to breach our fortifications, so you can rest easy. Nothing will be able to anchor this side of your living quarters."

It was Karunthel, the Creator foreman who had shown up. He looked pretty much the same as before, with the noticeable addition of a cannon radiating a terrifying amount of energy that had been mounted onto his torso. The spider golem was turning more and more into a killer robot every day.

"What?" Zac blurted with confusion. "Are they both attacking us? They are supposed to be mortal enemies."

"I guess you youngsters gave them a scare. Should've finished them off sooner though, now they're crawling all over the island," Karunthel shrugged as he inspected Zac.

"Brat, your aura is getting nice and condensed. But if you would accept a piece of advice, don't get hung up on perfection. Cultivation might not be a sprint, but it is not a marathon either. You need to maintain momentum and keep pushing forward. The second you stop it will be much harder to start running again," he said.

"Thank you," Zac said, though he couldn't really focus on the advice after hearing the whole island was under attack. "I will soon evolve. So you are fine here?"

"They have already realized we're a Mercantile Structure and will soon move on," Karunthel laughed. "And I am not allowed to blast those rats who are staying outside the shields. Not within the job description. But I've expanded the shield to the maximum area that I am allowed, which will keep part of your coastline safe at least."

"Thank you, I'll visit you once this is dealt with," Zac nodded and immediately started running toward Port Atwood.

Zac rapidly moved through his private forest like a specter, each step with [Loamwalker] moving him fifty meters forward. Urgency and some confusion made his mind muddled as he tried to figure out just what was going on. Had the two bitter enemies really put their differences aside just for him? He had never heard of anything like it.

And more importantly, how the hell had they found these secluded islands so easily? It had taken months of exploration to find the mainland, so finding his small island would be like looking for a needle in a haystack.

He could only pray he wasn't too late yet again. With both him and Ogras gone and Alea in a coma, there was pretty much no one who would be able to rebuff an assault. He could only thank the System that it was kind enough to provide a warning that his people were under attack.

Another massive shockwave erupted in the distance, containing enough power to almost throw him off his feet. A plume of golden flames rose into the sky, and Zac remembered Ogras' descriptions of the zealot's powers all too well. Fury started to smolder in his mind, fiery anger at the people who dared launch such a massive strike at a town full of civilians and non-combat personnel.

The world shrunk around him as he pushed [Loamwalker] to its limits. The towering flames came from the northeast, some ways inland from the coast. It was the part of Port Atwood that contained the Academy and the structures related to his army. It seemed the attackers knew what parts they needed to take out first.

Was there really a spy on the island?

Port Atwood had thankfully overhauled its defenses since the last waves of attack though, and his people should at least be able to hold out for while even against the Undead Empire. Back then he

barely had the resources to run a simple town protection array, but Port Atwood had been a Global City for quite some time now.

He had given his subordinates almost free reign with the town's funds in order to develop Port Atwood, and he saw waves of flames slamming into a sturdy crystalline barrier as he approached the battlefield. Four massive fractals shone in the sky, and one of them suddenly lit up.

A tremendous surge of chaotic energies cut straight through the seas of flames with such force that space was ripped open, and a thundering explosion could be heard as the attack hit something on the other side of the ten-meter tall wall.

It was clear that the town had added some great new defenses, but both the Undead Empire and the Church of the Everlasting Dao were terrifying forces with extremely deep heritages. A golden ball slammed into the crystalline shield protecting the wall the next moment, causing massive cracks all over as streams of fire shot toward the people standing guard on the wall walk.

Zac's eyes widened with anger as he saw the gouts of flames pour down toward his army who were desperately trying to maintain the barrier. The ground cracked beneath his feet as he leaped forward, and a storm of leaves spread out to create a vast canopy to block out the rain of fire.

"Lord Atwood!" a Valkyrie suddenly screamed, and hundreds of hopeful eyes were turned in his direction.

Zac only nodded in response as he flew toward the golden ball in the sky with furious momentum, and his body was hardened by the Fragment of the Coffin as his fist slammed into the molten core. A shockwave spread out in all directions from his punch, and a few warriors were even thrown off from the wall as the golden ball was twisted and deformed before it was flung away.

Another shudder spread through the earth as the ball landed some distance outside the wall. Zac himself landed on the wall walk, and he tried to understand what was going on outside. However, the only thing that met his gaze was a sea of flames that spread in every direction outside the city wall.

The lunatics had set half the island on fire it seemed.

"What's going on?" Zac asked as a familiar demon rushed to his side.

It was Harvath, one of the Demon captains who had accompanied him in the Underworld and the earlier Incursions.

"We discovered six massive ships heading this way about a day ago, carrying both the undead and zealots of the Church of Everlasting Dao," Harvath explained between pants. "We tried to stop their advance with repeated raids using our smaller vessels, but we only managed to sink two of them before our ships were too burned to continue attacking."

"The Undead Empire has really teamed up with the Church?" Zac asked incredulously, still having trouble believing it was true.

"It appears that way," Harvath said. "Three of the remaining ships sailed for our island, with the final one veering off for some reason. We fear that other settlements might have been hit."

"You don't know?" Zac asked with a frown.

“They are somehow blocking our teleporters. It is like this island has become isolated from the rest of the world. We have lost connection to all other locations on our Teleportation List. We could still teleport within the island until recently, but we lost that ability a few minutes ago. We have sent out scouting vessels but haven’t gotten word back,” he said.

“How’s that possible?” Zac muttered with a frown.

“General Ilvere believes the ship might have dropped some manner of spatial disruption arrays into the ocean as they sailed toward us,” Harvath said. “But we don’t know.”

Zac frowned when he heard about the block. It seemed to be the same technology as that which almost got Alea and his whole army killed. He hadn't expected being troubled by such technology right as he returned, and he didn't have any real way to solve them. The simplest method would be to destroy the jammers, but he didn't even know what they looked like.

Were the Invaders trying to imprison him on this remote island?