

## The Fall 476

### Chapter 476: Sowing Discord

"How do things look with the Undead Incursion?" Zac asked after making sure that another molten ball wasn't coming their way. "Have you found out how long until it activates?"

"... The array has already been activated," the demon said after a brief hesitation. "Half the sky of the main continent is reportedly covered with a green array."

"WHAT?!" Zac almost roared, his eyes widening with shock. "Since when?"

"Four days ago," the demon sighed. "But it is not converting the world as of yet, it is currently drawing energy from the planet. Your sister and the human champions have worked hard to slow it down for your return, but I am not sure how much time there is left. Lady Atwood will likely know more."

"Ok, where is my sister right now?" Zac asked, his mind reeling after getting bombarded by a series of unwelcome news the past hour.

His miscalculation of the time he had remaining had caused massive repercussions for Earth, and he couldn't help but feel ashamed when he thought back to his meeting with Thea just before leaving for the tower. He could only pray that he had returned in time to set things right.

"She is fighting at Azh'Rodum," Harvath said. "She is holding the invaders back with your swarm of flying machines."

"My machines?" Zac repeated with confusion before he remembered the drones.

She had actually gained control of the drone swarms, which Zac guessed wasn't surprising considering Jeeves. Some fear flickered in his heart, but he knew he couldn't blame her for taking them out. If now was not the time to use it, then when? But another point of confusion suddenly entered his mind.

"Wait, Azh'Rodum? What are they doing so far inland?" Zac asked with a frown.

"We don't know. They first tried bombarding us from a distance where we couldn't retaliate, but our shields were too strong for those attacks. So two ships stayed outside this town while they prepared for a siege, while the largest ship sailed north," the demon captain explained. "We believe they might be targeting the Vein through the mine."

"Who went with her?" Zac asked.

"Most of the Valkyries, along with Ilvere and a squad of E-Grade demons. Azh'Rodum is not as strongly defended, and it is the gateway to the Nexus Vein, so most of our elites went there. Our task here is simply to hold out until you and the young lord returned, or until the threat inland was averted. The young master... Is he here?" Harvath asked as he looked around.

"Ogras is still in the Tower of Eternity, he is fine. I got a prompt that Port Atwood was under attack so I immediately returned. Ogras will return a bit later after he has dealt with some matters over there," Zac explained as his mind went over the details.

Some things didn't make sense. His force had been in combat for over a day. Why hadn't the system warned him? He also suddenly remembered the spike in levels for Thea and Billy roughly twelve hours ago in real-time.

"Are Billy and Thea on the island?" Zac asked.

"Yes, it was only thanks to them we managed to sink one of the ships before we were pushed back," Harvath nodded, some respect shining in his eyes. "They are currently on bed-rest. Janos had to hypnotize the big one to prevent him from running out and bashing the invaders with that nasty club of his. They will be fine in a week or two."

Zac sighed in relief when hearing those two were fine. It looked like they actually had risked their lives to protect his people. But it made him all-the-more confused why the alert had only warned him just now.

"Did something change a few minutes ago?" Zac suddenly asked.

"A few minutes ago?" the demon repeated. "Nothing special has happened except our communications being blocked. They did also start shooting those massive balls at our shield recently. We can't see them any longer because of the flames, but the zealots set up large siege tools some distance from here."

Zac slowly nodded in understanding. It seemed that the System only gave out a warning at the last moment, which was a valuable piece of information. He couldn't rely on the System as a warning call to protect his home. This time he was lucky enough to be able to get back to town almost instantly, but that wouldn't always be the case.

He really needed to erect a more permanent protection that would withstand any threat on Earth.

"I can't see anything in front of me, what are they doing on the other side of the flames?" Zac finally asked.

"Our vision has been blocked for a while now as well. It's almost exclusively the Cultists who have set up camp outside. We received a report that the situation is almost the opposite at Azh'Rodum before we lost contact. There's almost only undead warriors up there."

"I'll deal with the attackers here before heading to Azh'Rodum," Zac said. "Try to find out if they've erected some sort of array anywhere. We need to break the arrays blocking our communications."

With that, he simply jumped out from the wall and landed in a sea of flames that rose over a dozen meters into the air. He had just jumped twenty meters or so, but his vision was completely blocked in both directions, and he was forced to activate the Fragment of the coffin to not get burnt. A thought suddenly struck him and his Specialty Core activated.

The undead and the cultists might be working together on the surface, but things weren't very harmonious from the sound of it. Perhaps he could cause some confusion within their ranks with his alternate form while also letting his Hatchetman class rest for a bit. Both the main skills of Hatchetman were on cool-down, after all, along with [Hatchetman's Rage].

Granted, he was still pretty confident at defeating this army even with Hatchetman in a weakened state. His power had almost doubled in the ten short days since he left Earth, while the Invaders still should

have some small restrictions to their power. Not only that, but he had also gone through all sorts of life-and-death encounters, sharpening his skills to the utmost.

His body grew as the pitch-black armor covered his body, and Zac caused the flames surrounding him to die out with one massive swing of his bardiche. It put him face-to-face with the Zealot army, and he was delighted to see their anger and confusion as a sea of miasma spread out around him as he started running toward their front-lines.

"You! What ploy is this!" a massive roar echoed out from the army, and a huge lizardman decked in a thick armor shining in gold and red pushed past the inquisitors at the front.

Zac didn't answer, but he rather took out one of the enormous Unholy Beacons from his Cosmos Sack and slammed it into the ground like he was planting a flag. It immediately started spewing out miasma, though most of it was burned away by the surrounding flames. But this was more about sending a message than getting more death-attuned energy, and the effect was immediate.

"Heretic! Your sins will be judged today!" the infuriated Bishop roared, and Zac couldn't help but snicker beneath his helmet as the undead liaisons were mobbed by infuriated cultists.

There was no time to waste though as his sister was fighting for her life as far as he knew. The only reason he didn't immediately rush to Azh'Rodum was that he believed her to be somewhat safe with the help of the drone swarm he had left on Port Atwood. She also had access to the Town Shop, meaning she could keep buying one defensive layer after another as was needed.

He still didn't want to waste time with the crazy zealots though, and he stomped down onto the ground to teleport into the middle of the army. However, he was surprised to find himself rebuffed, and he stumbled a bit as he appeared right outside a golden shield that had appeared in front of the army.

"We have fought your kind for millions of years. Did you truly think we didn't come prepared?!" the bishop roared with mad laughter.

Zac knew he was putting himself in a disadvantage by fighting as an undead against the cultists, as they had whole armies dedicated to fighting the Undead Empire. However, he saw it as an opportunity to fight in an adverse situation, and he still felt he had the strength to prevail. There was no way he wouldn't be able to deal with these guys head-on unless the leaders of the two Incursions had shown up on his doorstep.

But that would be fine with Zac as well, as killing those two would essentially end the incursions and threat to Earth.

His arm swelled as he forced his arm full of Miasma for [Unholy Strike], and the whole area shook as the shield was beset by a series of furious swings empowered by his improved Middle Stage Dao Fragment. Almost a dozen of the robed priests standing behind the shield hunkered over after the first swing, with a few even starting bleeding down their ears.

A storm of golden flames beset him as Zac tried to force his way through the shield, but he kept them at bay with [Immutable Bulwark]. However, he noticed with some surprise that the flames were like sticky napalm, and they stayed on the fractal bulwark and slowly whittled it down. It was like the flames and

the Miasma canceled each other out, and Zac felt a far higher-than-normal consumption just to maintain the fractal shield.

His reserves of death-attuned energies were thankfully immense due to his almost inhuman attribute pool, and he kept providing the bulwark with more and more energy until he managed to create a crack in the wall. He forced himself through in an instant, he was upon the cultists like a fox in a henhouse.

Two burly clergymen tried to take him down by swinging scepters that contained the same fiery energy as the ranged attacks. Zac blocked one of them with his axe, and the other one got slammed with [Everlasting] with enough force to be thrown dozens of meters away. Zac heard a crunching sound after the man was hit with the shield-bash, and he felt a surge of energy not long after he fell onto the ground.

"Regroup!" the leader from before shouted, but Zac didn't want to give them any time to retreat to a safe distance.

He stomped his foot into the ground once more, and the cage of [Profane Seal] rose from the ground and captured almost the whole army along with the siege tools that had been shooting out the molten cores at the City Shield. However, he was unable to spread his corrosive breath along with miasma from [Fields of Despair] to cover the cage, as waves of flames kept dispersing the mists.

Zac finally gave up on his usual tactic, and instead started fighting by hand as he commanded the fifteen spectral chains to target the weaker warriors. Ghosts kept appearing in the cage as well as hundreds of the cultists tried to destroy the gates and the towers of [Profane Seal], only to hurt themselves.

A hundred skeletal warriors also emerged from the ground, and they formed ten squads that moved across the cage to take out stragglers and interrupt the zealot's attempts to form a proper defense against the chains. Unfortunately, it seemed as though the cultists were quite adept at fighting skeletons, and Zac felt himself losing subordinates at a rapid pace.

However, it wasn't like the life and death of the skeletons mattered, as long as they fulfilled their purpose. The whole cage was an utter mess soon enough with battles taking place everywhere. Errant flames and miasmic gusts made visibility almost impossible, and Zac was only able to make sense of the situation with the help of [Cosmic Gaze].

A tremendous wave of golden flames threatened to swallow Zac whole as the siege weapons launched a barrage meant for shield-breaking right at him, scoring a few over fifteen zealots by mistake. He swiftly cut the projectiles apart with a Dao-infused swing, and he started taking out the operators the next moment.

One siege tool after another entered his Spatial ring as the controllers were cut into two, and the situation was turning gradually into his favor as each chain soon held multiple desiccated corpses while they whizzed around. The head priest had been suspiciously silent until now though, but Zac finally spotted him through the flames.

Two wings sprouted out from his back, and he rose over a dozen meters into the air even after the suppressive effect of the azure fractal sealing the cage. A glowing orb of flames over fifteen meters across emerged behind his back, making him look like an apostle of the sun. However, it still looked a bit hollow in Zac's eyes as he had witnessed the true flames conjured by Iz Tayn.

"Weight of the Heavens!" the priest roared and a massive array appeared in the sky above the cage the next moment.

Zac's eyes widened at the sight, but it still wasn't enough to make him despair or even worry. He had faced a lot stronger arrays just a few hours ago, and Zac still had almost half his treasures remaining if need be. Besides, the restrictive array from [Profane Seal] didn't only put pressure on the people inside, it also acted as a protection from outside interference.

But Zac realized that the cultists were going all-out as he spotted nine priests who had kept out of harm's way until now, each of them holding a metal sun toward the sky that seemed to burn the controllers alive. He immediately directed a chain toward each of the priests, but they were immediately rebuffed by a fiery wall of flames whose heat was enough to turn the spectral fetters into motes of miasma when they got too close.

A few seconds later the nine priests were gone, replaced with nine hovering suns positioned in a circle at the edge of the cage.

The nine glowing suns were clearly related to the array that had lit up in the sky above, but the main controller was no doubt the Bishop who was still hovering up in the air. Zac growled in frustration over the lack of ranged options in his Undying Bulwark class, and he opted to try out his recently invented tactic again.

A spectral chain made a few loops around his chest before it hoisted him up, but he only managed to rise five meters before the Bishop launched a stream of fire that destroyed the midsection of the chain. Zac helplessly fell down again, wondering if he actually had to waste one of his single-use treasures on a simple general.

"A lowly cretin wants to rise toward the sky?" The Bishop roared. "The Boundless Heaven's won't abide!"