

The Fall 511

Chapter 511: Plans and Schemes

"How is it?" Gregor asked as he spat out some blood from his mouth, reminding him of his internal injuries.

A decent number of wounds covered his body from ceaseless fighting over the past two days, and the two newly gained scimitars in his hands felt as heavy as mountains. But there was not much else to do. The zombie bastards had gone crazy out of nowhere, and it only became worse when that shudder went through the planet.

But the pain was intermixed with a sweet sense of bliss, as that shudder had indicated the continued survival of Earth. That man had really done it. One man and a small support staff charging into the core of the Dead Zone to kill the Lich King, and somehow living to tell the tale.

If only the other undead bastards could take the hint and throw in the towel as well.

"We won't be able to hold much longer," Lararia frowned as she looked out over the frontlines. "I think our best bet is fighting a battle of retreat, leading them away from our sector."

"Some of these bastards will still ignore us and do whatever they want," Oksana muttered. "Our scouts are indicating that packs of zombies are appearing all over the place, causing havoc."

"What about Enigma?" Gregor asked.

"We can't find him," Lararia said with worry. "He took his squad to search for the general, but we've lost contact."

"Well, let's hope he's just held up," Gregor mumbled. "Our faction will need – Wait, is that him?"

The other Councilors followed his gaze, and their eyes immediately lit up. It wasn't their unsociable strongman who essentially lived out in the battlefields, but rather an emerald leaf that pushed through the clear blue sky.

The others didn't have time to comment before someone jumped out from the flying treasure, falling straight toward the sea of zombies like a meteor. A terrifying impact erupted the next second as a coruscating wave of rock and mud spread out like a tsunami, swallowing hundreds of zombies in an instant.

A massive plume of sand rose to the sky from the impact and obscured their vision. However, Gregor barely had time to register the series of events as an enormous blade ripped the dust apart as it shot out with terrifying momentum.

It was at least fifty meters long, and the zombies were cut apart as though they were made from paper. Was this the same wretched creatures that caused their soldiers so much trouble due to their sturdy bodies? A shocking corridor of destruction ripped forward, leaving not a single body intact. Gregor had to rapidly blink a couple of times as he stared at the edge's advance, as it almost felt like his eyes were cut by just looking at the skill.

Gregor himself and many of the councilors had tried to take advantage of the thick density of zombies in a similar fashion, utilizing their area skills to cause as much damage as possible. However, the zombies were just too tough. Each zombie drained their attacks, like they sucked up some of the energy like sponges, causing the skills to fizzle after a dozen kills or so.

However, Lord Atwood's attack seemed to face no such impediments. It kept flying until they destabilized well over a hundred meters away from him. Was it a difference of Dao? The fractal blade that cut through the horde like butter either had a greenish tint, the color giving the attack a distinct power.

They had already guessed that Lord Atwood had surpassed the stage of Dao Seeds, and this seemed to be a confirmation of it.

However, it quickly became apparent that the enormous blade was no ultimate strike, as Lord Atwood seemingly was able to keep conjuring them at will. One, two, three blades followed suit in short order, each of reaping their own set of the unliving as Lord Atwood moved with impossible speed within the horde. Each blade took out thousands of the clumped-together bastards.

"So many of them dead in an instant," Oksana muttered with disbelief written all over her face. "Is this the power of the E-Grade?"

"No way," Lararia said with a shake of her head, her tail nervously flitting back and forth from watching the bloody display. "If that was the case, then the general would have singlehandedly decimated our army. This is Lord Atwood's personal power."

"Shit, didn't he just fight the Lich King yesterday? And now he's already back at full power?" Gregor sputtered with disbelief. "Is that man unstoppable?"

Each step moved Lord Atwood fifty meters forward and resulted in another gory wave of destruction, and a primordial fear gripped Gregor's heart as he looked at the carnage. They could sense his immense aura even all the way from where they stood, and Gregor felt like a helpless hare gazing at an apex predator.

An eruption of darkness suddenly swallowed another section of the zombie horde, and the undead fell by the hundreds. Gregor looked at the spectacle with confusion until he suddenly noticed the horned demon emerging out of the shadows to decimate everything in his surroundings, only to disappear a moment later.

He kept moving the battlefield through teleportation, like a grim reaper toying with the mindless undead. Gregor had thought Lord Atwood to be an outlier after he essentially dealt with the Fire Golem Incursion singlehandedly, but it looked like he extremely capable followers as well.

"Enigma isn't even a match to the right-hand man," Lararia muttered, echoing his thoughts. "We'd probably need the whole council to secure a kill. Provided that this is the limits of that man's power."

"Don't speak such unlucky words, what if they hear us?" Oksana said with a frown. "Besides, they are our saviors."

"Should we join them?" Gregor ventured after a while.

“No point,” a new voice said, and they saw Romal walk over, his bloody shovel slung across his back. “We might just get in the way. Let’s hold the line and deal with stragglers until they’re done.”

The other Councilors nodded in agreement, and they spent the next hour dealing with the scraps while the two monsters kept wreaking havoc. Joanna, the spear warrior following Lord Atwood, joined them early on and confirmed the destruction of the Undead Incursion.

The demon joined them half an hour later, appearing in their midst without notice. However, Lord Atwood kept mowing down Zombies for over two hours, methodically decimating the undead. Every three seconds the air would shudder as he released a massive fractal edge, and he would move toward the next group without bothering to look at the results.

Gregor had already turned numb to that man’s actions, but he couldn’t help but wonder just how much Cosmic Energy that man had used by this point. But it looked like even Lord Atwood had a limit, and he finally stopped his carnage as he started walking toward their army.

A tremendous aura radiated from his body, but Gregor was surprised to feel a refreshing aura coming from it. However, the zombies clearly didn’t share his sentiments as they fled for their lives, desperately moving out of the Dao Field as he walked toward the Council’s Army.

Releasing the aura essentially ended the battle, and over a hundred thousand warriors silently watched the approach of a single bloodied man. Even Gregor felt mesmerized as he looked at Lord Atwood’s approach, as he drew quite the picture with the suns setting behind his back.

The bestial axe in his hand glistened in the sunlight as dark blood dripped from the teeth fastened to its axehead. However, the white flowing robes he wore were unmarred by even a speck of dust, proving that he hadn’t even been close to becoming injured during the fight.

However, the most gripping things were his eyes. It felt like they contained a boundless power that made Gregor shudder from hundreds of meters away. His very existence was cause for pressure, and it looked like the army felt the same as a wide passage in the ranks opened up without any order. It wasn’t surprising, of course.

Who’d dare to block a man who had just mowed down millions of zombies?

Lord Atwood soon appeared in front of them and nodded as he stashed away his weapon.

“Have you found any clues about the general who was leading this horde?” he simply asked.

“Ah- Ehm, no,” Gregor said, quickly finding his bearings. “I’m afraid not. The horde suddenly turned chaotic and rowdy without warning two days ago, we believe it might have been because the general fled. Enigma set out to find him with a group of elites, but we haven’t heard any news.”

Lord Atwood nodded with a sigh.

“Well, the portal is closed and the Dead Zone is shrinking. We’ll be able to smoke him out sooner or later. Contact Port Atwood if you hear anything,” he said.

“Of course,” Gregor nodded.

“Where’s the closest teleporter?” Lord Atwood asked.

“An hour by foot in that direction,” Romal said with a weak voice as he pointed westward.

“Thank you for your hard work,” Lord Atwood said as he jumped back onto his flying treasure. “But remember, this isn’t over. There are still multiple dangers threatening Earth, so don’t let down your guards. I will hold an auction in a few weeks, there will be a lot of items that will be helpful for the elites of our world. You should come.”

“Port Atwood next?” the mysterious demon asked, but Lord Atwood shook his head.

“No, there’s someone I need to talk to first,” Lord Atwood said with a shake of his head.

“Who?” the demon asked with surprise.

“Verana,” Zac simply answered as he nodded for his bodyguard to start flying. “I need some answers.”

A bloodthirsty laugh echoed out across the area as the demon joined him on the leaf, leaving a subdued group of councilors behind. Only when the trio had turned into a small spot on the horizon did Gregor remember to breathe, and he realized his back was completely drenched in sweat.

“Imagine if we actually had gone with the original plan to fight that monster,” Gregor wryly smiled. “We’d be skeletons tossed into some corner of the Underworld by now.”

And more importantly, he felt very happy that he wasn’t related to that Verana character, going by the fire in Lord Atwood's eyes.

A subdued silence lingered in the large conference room, with no one of the 10-odd people present wanting to be the first one to speak up. Thomas wasn’t in any hurry either, so he slowly looked out across the room of representatives to get a sense of their thoughts.

The power dynamic of the New World Government had slowly changed with democracy giving way to hegemony, but such was the natural result in a world like theirs. However, Thomas knew all-too-well that his current position was nowhere near as stable as that of the Super Brother-Man, Zachary Atwood.

He was unable to completely subdue the other factions of the government with his force alone, so he was still forced to accede to the will of the many in many scenarios. It did bog down his plans a bit, but he could only blame himself for being lacking in talent.

“It’s closed and the array has been turned off,” Francis Girardot finally muttered as he looked over at Thomas.

Thomas slowly nodded in confirmation, but he didn’t speak up just yet. Zachary Atwood had made his move after all, and he was curious to see what the others had to say about it. His biggest worry right now was that the other members would start flocking to his rising star, abandoning the arduously crafted plans of theirs.

“Is this good news or bad news?” Johana, the Russian representative, asked.

“It is obviously good news to have one less threat to worry about,” Asano said from the other side of the table. “The question is whether it changes our plans.”

Multiple heads slowly turned toward Thomas sitting at the short end of the table. Asano's words had a clear implication. What can you provide that the Super Brother-Man can't?

"This doesn't change our plans," Thomas finally said. "Zachary defeating the Undead Empire is not wholly unexpected. The undead were powerful, but ultimately limited by the rules of the System. The real threat to Earth is not. The threat of the Redeemer remains. We will proceed with the Ark World Project."

Murmurs of agreement went around the table, though a few faces looked troubled.

"What about bringing Zachary Atwood into the plan?" a councilor ventured. "It would greatly improve our chances to seize the item."

"Absolutely not," Thomas Fischer said without hesitation. "Remember the uses of the Dimensional Seed? We want it to create a safe haven for our people. But what would Zachary Atwood use it for?"

"The C-Grade," Asano muttered thoughtfully.

"Exactly. All our intelligence indicates that he only cares about the safety of his sister. He even left his whole army to fend for themselves for weeks against the undead. He mysteriously disappeared for a month while humans died by the millions. He will no doubt save the seed to break through in the future," Thomas said without missing a beat.

"But he's facing the same threat as us. The master of the Dominators," another representative muttered. "Surely he can be convin-

"We already possess two tokens that would take us off-world," Thomas cut him off. "There is no way that Zachary Atwood doesn't have at least as many. He can always cut and run, bringing his closest people with him after having looted all the treasures of Earth."

The representatives slowly nodded in agreement, clearly seeing the problem as well.

"Besides. It's not like we're hopeless," Thomas added with a smile. "I'm happy to announce that Silverfox and I have finally managed to broker an agreement with the True Sky-faction of the Ark World. Zachary Atwood is strong, but can he contend with their high E-Grade ancestors?"