

The Fall 547

Chapter 547: Monster

Zac's danger sense was screaming for him to watch out, but he didn't need a sixth sense to realize that he was in trouble. He immediately activated [Hatchetman's Spirit] while the emerald leaves of [Nature's Barrier] exploded out from his body, covering him from every direction.

The spectral forest rose around him as well, but Zac's worries only intensified when he saw that the trees and leaves of his two skills were quickly stopped in their tracks as well. The leaves just froze in the air, utterly incapable of intercepting any attacks. He tried to look around in search of a threat, but he found himself stuck in position as well, no longer able to move at all.

The war was still raging in the distance though, proving that time hadn't really stopped. It seemed that the effect only reached 30 meters or so judging by the movement of the grass on the ground. It was an extremely uncomfortable experience to somehow be out of sync with the world around him. It felt a bit like when the world froze as the Chaos Pattern emerged during the tower, but he also got a similar feeling like when the Karmic Cultivator of the Hayner Clan tried to control his movements.

However, he could at least be certain that it wasn't the System who was messing with him. A large hooded being had appeared in the sky, reaching over twenty meters into the air. Zac tried to discern its features, but it actually looked like it didn't have a face. In place of facial features, there was just a swirling void.

It held some weird brass contraption that seemed to contain the mysteries of the universe itself, and it felt like it was this item that was rooting him in place. Zac couldn't be sure, but he believed that the skill both contained a hint of both Space and Karma. Zac guessed that it was the avatar of some sort of ultimate technique, and going by the types of energies there was one clear suspect; The Dominators.

Zac was quickly proven right when he finally spotted the source of the restraints, an unassuming Zhix wearing the standard combat regalia of the Zhix War Council Army. However, instead of the short spears or daggers that the Zhix favored, he was instead wielding a pitch-black spear of full length that hummed with power.

The reason Zac knew this spear-wielding Zhix was his attacker was simple; he couldn't sense the warrior's aura. It was just like when he first met Inevitability, it was almost like there was no one standing in front of him. However, the Zhix warrior was very much alive, and he stepped into the locked zone and started making his way toward Zac.

Zac strained to rip himself free, but he couldn't even begin amassing any power in his limbs. It felt like he was trying to overturn the fundamental laws of the universe by moving, he glanced at the Zhix with some incredulity. How was he this strong? The strength of this restraining skill meant two things.

First of all, he could pretty much be sure that he was dealing with Harbinger, the last of the three elite Dominators. He had already met the other two, and the presumed Dominators beneath the three leaders were over 15 levels behind. There was no way someone at level 85 would be able to unleash a force of this magnitude.

Secondly, the Dominator was likely burning his life-force to deal with him. Zac knew that the Dominators were strong, but there shouldn't be such a disparity that he couldn't even lift his fingers in response. There was also a familiar aura on him, reminding him of that old warrior among the Berum Resistance who sacrificed his life to let them assault the Nenotheop mountain.

Messing with life-force wasn't something that people could do willy-nilly. First of all, you generally needed some sort of Berserker skill to tap into the core of your being. Using such a thing was essential to sacrifice 800 warriors to kill 1000. It wasn't a tap you could turn on and off, but something that had a large risk of killing or crippling your cultivation. Zac knew he was an exception of sorts with how the Shard worked.

Harbinger was going a step further, putting everything on the line.

However, Zac didn't feel hopeless as there were no doubt limitations to a skill or treasure as powerful as this. As expected, not only did Harbinger have some problems pushing through the spatial lock himself, but the Avatar was slowly dissipating in the sky.

A quick calculation proved that Zac would get skewered before the lock dissipated though, and he frantically looked for a solution. A glance toward Thea showed that she was trapped as well, but she was thankfully at the edge of the sphere. There was no way that Harbinger would have time to target them both as he could only move at a slow walk.

The Cosmic Energy felt like syrup in his body, and Zac wasn't really able to rotate it with the momentum needed to activate his skills. However, he had actually already activated two of them, and Zac gave a command to the divine tree stalwartly standing behind him.

The ceremonial band on the tree trunk snapped, and a shield started to form around him. However, just the edges had time to materialize before it was frozen as well, essentially looking like a hollow ring completely incapable of defending anyone. Zac wanted to swear when he saw the scene, but he was unable to form the words.

A defensive talisman fizzled the next moment as well, proving that the restrictions didn't only apply to his skills.

Harbinger seemed to have expected the failures, and a small smile crept up across his face as he closed in on Zac. His spear moved in slow-motion, but it slowly angled itself to begin a mighty jab aimed straight at his throat. The Dominator was going for an instant kill.

Real worry finally started to grip Zac's heart as one back-up plan after another had failed. He had initially believed that he would always be able to flee with the help of his newly acquired escape talismans, but he wasn't so sure any longer after seeing how nothing seemed to work inside this field.

However, a shudder in his mind suddenly made his eyes light up. Most things were frozen in place, but there were exceptions. No matter what rules or Dao that were the basis for Harbingers skills, how could they trump the concepts of Creation and Oblivion. The two remnants were completely unaffected inside their prison, and the mysterious energies that had infiltrated his soul moved about as usual as well.

Wasn't this a perfect occasion to try out something he had been holding on to up till now?

Thea hovered frozen in the air, filled with a sense of impotence as she saw Zac in the same predicament. The terrifying Zhix pushed through the sealed space as though it was wading through water, and it was almost upon Zac. Its spear was already moving toward Zac's throat, and the weapon gained a stronger and stronger radiance.

The air around the weapon was cracking and splitting apart, which was very telling of its power. The Zhix was putting it all on the line with that one strike. Thea could even sense they were empowered by an offensive Dao Fragment, and she wasn't confident that even Zac's terrifying constitution would be able to withstand the attack.

She tried to figure out some way to help him out, just long enough for this seal to break, but she was coming up empty-handed. Her skills simply wouldn't activate, and she wasn't able to reach down toward her Cosmos Sack to take out any treasures. She felt her eyes were burning as she saw the spearpoint inching ever closer, passing straight beneath the incipient emerald shield that failed to properly form.

However, a shocking aura suddenly slammed into the core of her being and she looked with shock and horror at Zac. He looked the same as before, but Thea felt that she was gazing upon a natural calamity rather than a fellow cultivator. His eyes turned into metallic orbs as black runes slowly appeared across his face, seemingly creating a tattoo pathway that led down toward his shoulders.

The runes looked simple enough, but they still contained a primordial power, something that Thea hadn't even encountered when dealing with Irei or his terrifying sword intent. Just what had Zac gotten himself mixed up in to have something so terrifying appearing on his body?

Unfortunately, it didn't seem as though the Zhix was deterred by Zac's outburst of power, but rather the opposite. Its mouth curved upward in a ruthless smile and its until now subdued aura exploded outward, hitting Thea like a sledgehammer. How was this assassin so powerful? The aura was far stronger than that of Inevitability back during the hunt!

Was it actually Void's Disciple, the leader of the Dominators?

Or was Inevitability perhaps actually limited somehow inside the hunt, making that chain-wielding lunatic unable to put forth its full potential. It didn't matter right now though as the spear was cutting through space itself as it finally reached Zac's throat.

However, no blood was actually drawn as the mysterious runes already covered much of Zac's throat, and it seemed able to resist the sharp point of the pitch-black daggers. The Zhix didn't seem surprised, and a shimmering fractal halo made from inscrutable runes lit up behind him like he was a saint that had suddenly reached enlightenment.

The whole area was drowned in a shimmering dark-blue luster, and the spear gained newfound momentum as it was flooded with some sort of powerful energy. It allowed the spear to push even further into Zac's skin as it seemed to infuse the dagger itself with some mysterious power. Zac's defenses couldn't stop the weapon and the weapon finally started sliding into his throat. There were no groans of pain or gouts of blood, but Thea knew that was only because space was still frozen.

Despair flooded Thea's heart as she saw Zac's throat slowly being ripped open, the sickening sound of the spear digging deeper was the only thing she could hear in this frozen zone. Was this really it? Was

this how the savior of Earth would fall? Was the defense of his mysterious tattoos really not enough to save him?

A terrifying change suddenly took place as Zac finally exploded out with power. It was like that terrifying aura from before was congealed, and she looked on with incredulity as Zac's arms suddenly shot forward with impossible speed as a sphere of unadulterated power emerged from his hands.

It felt like Thea's brain stopped working as she looked at the brownish sphere. It was as big as a football but it somehow felt as massive as a sun. Even odder, it felt like her memory and impressions were continuously being destroyed and renewed as she looked at it, making it impossible for her to form an opinion on what that thing was actually made from. It was Dao but it wasn't Dao. It was Cosmic Energy but it wasn't Cosmic Energy.

One thing was for sure though; it wasn't restrained by the spatial cage they found themselves in, and it flew straight toward the chest of the Dominator. The Zhix saw the sphere shooting toward his body, but it completely ignored it and instead pushed its weapon even harder, seemingly fine with both of them going down to the underworld together.

But even that powerful Zhix couldn't have anticipated the scene that took place next.

There was no explosion and no shockwave as the ball hit the chest of the assassin, just an instantaneous expansion followed by utter annihilation. Thea couldn't see exactly how big the attack was, as there literally wasn't anything to see, but she could still sense what didn't exist. It felt like space and time had simply been removed from existence where the sphere exploded, and not even a vacuum remained.

The spatial lock was broken as the massive avatar in the sky fell apart, and the ground beneath Thea cracked as she shot away as quickly as her legs could move her. It wasn't a conscious decision, but a primal fear of whatever Zac had unleashed. To get too close was to die, where one's soul wouldn't even be able to remain. Only after running for hundreds of meters did she manage to stop herself, but her heart wouldn't stop beating like a drum.

Only then did Thea see what had happened to the Zhix. Its torso and most of its legs were simply gone, leaving not as much as a scrap behind. Most of its arms had been annihilated as well, only hanging on to its neck by a thin ribbon of flesh. She knew there was no coming back from that, especially as she could sense a hint of that aura of annihilation in its remaining body parts as well.

Zac looked the same as before apart from the running blood that stained his chest red. The spear was still embedded in his throat, but he ripped it out without a care in the world. Thea's horror increased even further when the wound closed on itself with speed visible to the eyes, and there was only one thought in her head when she saw those terrifying lifeless eyes of his.

Monster.