

The Fall 591

Chapter 591: The Hero's Journey

Zac spun around, just in time to see a hand materialize out of nowhere a meter away from him. It held some mechanism in its hand, but Zac slapped the thing out of the furry paw before he swung his axe twice in quick succession.

The clouds of [Rapturous Divide] spread in the area in front of him as a surprised-looking silvery werewolf was cut apart by the spatial divide. It was the werewolf leader who had been caught by surprise. He had somehow managed to hide completely in the moonlight, tricking both Zac's senses and his Danger sense.

Thankfully he had the tables turned on him because of the early warning, and the werewolf helplessly fell on the ground as his blood flowed like rivers. Zac didn't immediately target the other wolves, but he rather stopped for a second and looked down at the dying warrior. He didn't know why, but Zac felt an eerie sense of déjà vu as he saw the hand just now.

"It's you!" the werewolf coughed as he bled out, but his two blood-red eyes were actually staring at the girl fifty meters away rather than at Zac. "You weren't restrained!"

Zac looked over in confusion and was surprised to see that the young woman was in an extremely precarious condition for some reason, with blood freely running from her eyes, nose, and ears. She couldn't even respond to the werewolf's accusations, as she puked out both her dinner and a bucket of blood before she fell in a heap.

"You used the eyes of time to meddle! Don't think this will save you! You hold the key to immortality, and the Lunar Tribe will not be stopped! We will-" werewolf raved until the light in his eyes died.

The dying words of the werewolf leader rekindled the feeling of wrongness, but he was more concerned about dealing with the remaining werewolves. He left the dead leader where he was and instead focused on the last two as he rushed toward the gate. However, he couldn't believe what he was seeing when the werewolves actually made a 180-turn, rushing straight toward him.

Did that werewolf leader hold such a big position in their hearts that they were ready to throw their lives away to avenge him? Zac's state was pretty bad from fighting so soon after node-breaking, but these remaining wolves were absolutely not his match.

Zac prepared to meet their assault head-on, but he found himself swinging his axe through empty space as the wolves suddenly disappeared. He immediately sensed where they had appeared though; right next to the girl and the fallen corpse of their leader.

A wave of anger surged in his mind when he thought of the wretched state of the former captive. She was clearly on the verge of death. Had the wolves decided to retaliate against her instead of him when realizing they couldn't deal with him?

Rage bubbled in his heart when he saw her pitiable state, and he once more pushed himself beyond what was safe, instantly appearing next to the closest werewolf. The beastkin desperately reached for a pouch on his leaders' waist as his body turned into moonlight, but the process was interrupted in the middle as Zac punched clean through his head with an Axe-Infused jab.

The other werewolf actually appeared right next to him before his attack was even finished, snatching the satchel and disappearing. But his camouflage was nowhere near the level of his fallen leader, especially not when most of the moonlight in the area had dissipated by now. He might as well have skipped using the skill as Zac could see his outline perfectly with the help of [Cosmic Gaze].

Zac caught up with him with the help of [Loamwalker] and ended his life in one swing. He looted the stolen pouch without losing his momentum before he appeared right next to the smallest werewolf who was still desperately typing on his tablet. Despair flooded his eyes when he saw Zac appear next to him, but a hint of ruthlessness flashed in his eyes as he pushed a button at the corner of his tablet.

A surge of danger screamed in Zac's mind, allowing him to barely dodge a metal spike as the wall came alive, ruthlessly stabbing at both himself and the werewolf. One attack after another was launched in quick succession like a crashing wave of liquid metal.

A painful wound was ripped open in Zac's side as the wall almost had turned into a terrifying maw that tried to swallow him whole, but he pushed through the pain as he ran for his life. The werewolf was even worse off as he was instantly killed by an alloy spike that pierced his head. Zac risked it to look behind, just in time to see the corpse being dragged inside the wall itself.

The scene only boosted Zac's desire to escape, but he still stopped for an instant to snatch up the wounded girl before he ran into the forest. He felt the spikes pierce into the ground right behind him even after reaching the edge of the forest, and only after running for another minute could he confirm that the wall wasn't hunting him any longer.

The girl had already gone unconscious again, and Zac sighed as he fed her some of his better healing pills for both the body and the soul before dealing his own wounds. She was his ticket to learning about this base, and he couldn't let her die after going through all that trouble.

A sudden wave of dizziness threatened to push him into the embrace of unconscious just like the last time he fought while still over-doing it right after breaking open a node, but he couldn't risk it in this place. A burst of pain jolted him awake as he stabbed himself in the leg, and the shock to his system pushed the drowsiness away.

His body was still in a pretty pathetic state though, but it slowly improved over the next two hours. The wound in his side was purely physical in its form, which allowed him to quickly heal it up with the help of [Surging Vitality]. It cost him most of the energy from his battle, but it wasn't all that much anyway.

Only the leader was powerful, but his aura was pretty unstable even before the fight. The energy rewarded by the System took things like that into account, so he didn't get nearly as much energy from this battle as from the one against the wolves.

The whole fight made him wonder what the purpose of this training session was. He hadn't really learned anything new from the battle, and it definitely hadn't pushed him beyond his limits to make some sort of breakthrough.

Was it more about setting a series of events in motion?

A second quest prompt quickly answered his question for him.

The Hero's Journey (Training (2/10)): Rescue your scouting squad before they are moved from the relay station. Reward: Reward based on performance at the end of training regimen. (0/7). [04:34:22] NOTE: Three deaths count as failure. Failure to comply with training regimen will result in loss of two random skills and 7 levels.]

Zac quickly read the quest, and a sense of relief filled him when he saw that the punishment had lessened. However, the loss of skills was still there, meaning that he definitely couldn't skip it. Then again, he had no plans to do so anyway.

He had already decided to rescue his people the moment the werewolf leader opened his mouth, so the quest didn't really change anything this time around. The problem was that there was a time limit for this quest.

Four hours wasn't little, but it wasn't a lot either. The relay station was definitely on the other side of the wall, but the gate had disappeared when that smaller werewolf somehow triggered the defenses of the wall.

The encounter had also proved that there was even more about this place he didn't understand than he had anticipated. He took out a small trinket from his Spatial ring and he turned it over a few times before stowing it away again. It was the thing that the Werewolf leader tried to attack him with before he was killed, but Zac couldn't figure out how it worked or what it did at all.

Who knew how technocrat weaponry and tricks these werewolves had? Zac was afraid that he would just get himself killed if he stormed the relay station blindly. Perhaps they could control the walls freely, easily trapping him in a corridor before flooding it with spatial tears. Not even he would be able to escape something like that.

Zac's eyes slowly turned to the unconscious girl lying next to him. She was the key to this mission. He felt a bit bad about bringing her with him on a rescue mission in her wounded state, but he didn't have a lot of options. He couldn't risk failing the quest, and she would definitely increase the odds of success thanks to her knowledge of this place.

At least the girl's situation seemed to have stabilized thanks to his pills, though she was still unconscious. He looked down at her curiously, feeling for some reason that they had met before. But that was obviously impossible since she clearly wasn't someone from his force. She was wearing what looked like a technocrat uniform, but she was definitely a cultivator judging by the aura she unconsciously emitted.

Zac couldn't be certain, but it felt like she had recently evolved to the E-Grade, which was pretty impressive considering her young age and the somewhat lacking cultivation environment. Then again, the girl might look 20, but she could be 100 years old for all Zac knew.

Normally Zac would have been happy to recuperate a while longer while waiting for the girl to come around, but the timer left him restless. He was in decent shape in any case, and he hadn't used any of his long cooldown skills during the battle. It was time to start looking for a way to get to the other side of the wall.

He got up to his feet and slung the girl across his shoulder before he made his way back toward the wall as he kept vigil of the surroundings. There might be more werewolves lurking in the area, or some other

hidden traps initiated by the werewolf technician. But it looked like the alloy had returned to normal, and an unmoving wall met his eyes when he reached the edge of the forest.

Even throwing anything from boulders to corpses at the wall elicited no response, and Zac finally dared to personally move closer. He let the girl down on a patch of grass before he started to prod the wall, but there was no sign of the gate at all. A quick survey of the immediate section of the wall exposed a pretty huge crack a few hundred meters away, but Zac was extremely hesitant to use it.

The wolves hadn't even tried using those cracks as a means of escape when facing death, making Zac believe that the jagged scars in the walls were deathtraps. But he had no idea what to do next. He had found a few technological gadgets along with a spare tablet in the werewolf leader's cosmos sack, but he had no idea how to use it.

The tablet wouldn't turn on, and the disks wouldn't stick to the wall no matter how hard Zac pushed. Three minutes passed without him making any progress, and he finally couldn't wait any longer. He walked over to the unconscious girl as he took out a bottle of water. However, an idea struck him and he released a burst of killing intent aimed at her. It actually worked. The girl groaned as her eyelids fluttered, and she woke up a second later.

Her bleary eyes peered back and forth until they finally found Zac. Her pupils constricted for a second, but she quickly calmed down as she slowly got up to a sitting position.

"Thank you for saving me. I'm Leviala Cartava," she said with a weak voice.