

## The Fall 596

### Chapter 596: Hands

“Who are you?!” a bulky werewolf roared as he produced a large spear that seemed to be made from the same material as the walls, and a quick estimate by Zac indicated there were around fifty werewolves in the emptied-out storeroom.

It was a bit more than Zac had hoped, but he knew that he couldn't back down now. Zac's only response to the inquiry was unleashing a roar at the top of his lungs, reinforced with his aura and billowing killing-intent. The very air in the room vibrated, and two large screens that displayed some unintelligible data actually cracked pressure the pressure.

The sudden outburst made the werewolves freeze for an instant like they had been faced with a dangerous predator, giving Zac a brief window to scan the large warehouse that had been outfitted into what looked a bit like a campsite. He immediately found what he was looking for; a group of dirty and bloodied humans and one demon huddled in a corner chained to the wall.

All of them carried somewhat serious wounds, with two apparently being unconscious. The pathetic state of his people ignited another surge of fury in his heart, and any hesitation flew out of his head as he threw out over a hundred items while activating [Nature's Punishment].

The werewolves had already regained their bearing after the surprising outburst, and they started to radiate lunar light one by one. The room was over two hundred meters across, but it was still a lot more confined compared to the earlier battles in the forests. More importantly; the walls were reflective, and Zac worried what would happen if they were allowed to completely unleash their Bloodline War Array.

However, the cold moonlight was overpowered before it even had a chance to stabilize as the whole area erupted in an unceasing cascade of elemental eruptions.

Huge flowers wrought from flame bloomed as icicles as long as five meters fell from the sky. Lakes of thunder covered the ground and torrential winds full of hidden blades cut at the flustered werewolves. It was as though an army of elementalists had descended upon Relay Station, intent on ripping it apart.

There obviously were no mages assisting Zac in his rescue attempt though, but the commotion was rather the result of throwing out a full stack of low and medium-grade talismans at the cost of a decent chunk of his Cosmic Energy. These low-quality offensive talismans would normally not be able to kill even a peak F-Grade warrior, let alone these werewolves with powerful constitutions.

But packed together in a confined space like this they could cause some serious harm. More importantly, they emitted almost blinding light while the explosions made any attempts of organization impossible.

A storm of Spatial Tears erupted the next second as Zac's hidden ace, a [Void Ball], detonated right where the most powerful-looking werewolves were fending off blasts from every direction. A few werewolves were immediately cut into ribbons, but most of them suddenly turned into light, allowing the tears to pass right through their intangible form.

Zac had already learned about this bloodline ability though, so he wasn't surprised to see them materializing almost immediately with various degrees of wounds. There were still a lot of chaotic

Spatial Tears around them as well, forcing the werewolves to find another way to protect themselves. Most of them were suddenly enclosed in red barriers as they jumped out of the way.

The shields were obviously of the same source as the ones he had seen in this base before, but the werewolves had managed to construct portable defensive mechanisms.

However, it looked like the barriers shared one inconvenient trait with the barriers of the base itself. The spatial tears seamlessly entered the shields themselves, melding with them into one entity. Zac couldn't be sure, but he felt that it was no way that some portable device would be able to lock in and contain a spatial tear.

As expected, the leaders quickly grabbed small machines hidden in various pockets and threw them far away, and a series of small explosions soon after as the machines erupted into what looked like weakened copies of the [Void Ball] itself. The werewolf leaders had managed to save their hides, but Zac had already achieved his purpose.

The chaos caused by the [Void Ball] and explosive talismans had caused complete disorder amongst the ranks of the werewolves, and their Lunar War Array had almost completely fallen apart.

Zac knew they would be able to restore order soon enough, but the confusion had given him just enough time to conjure the enormous wooden hand hovering by the ceiling fifty meters up in the air. Zac didn't waste even a second before the large emerald array appeared, and a small branch started to descend the moment it appeared.

"Above!" a werewolf shouted, but it was too late.

The branch rapidly grew as innumerable branches sprouted, each of them shooting for a werewolf. Transcendent lights rose to meet their descent, and smoke rose from Zac's hand as the damage was transmitted from the avatar in the sky. However, the wooden punishment contained an almost boundless vitality, and that effect was only boosted even further thanks to the Fragment of the Bodhi and his newly acquired [Spiritual Void].

His strike was chock-full of Dao, and bark rained down from the sky as it was ripped off and regrew in a rapid cycle of growth and withering. Zac's consumption of energy was enormous to withstand the hastily erected War Array, but their defense had one fatal weakness; it didn't actually provide any physical defenses.

A massive surge of Cosmic Energy filled his body as one werewolf after another was speared through. Over ten branches were aiming for each werewolf, and they could only maintain their intangible form for a short while. Over half the werewolves died from the blitz attack before the War Array finally managed to exhaust [Nature's Punishment] to the point that Zac could no longer maintain it.

Just under twenty werewolves remained at this point, some of them maimed or even grievously wounded from fending off the branches of the bloody tree that now stood in the center of the Relay Station like a cursed effigy adorned with carcasses for offerings. Surrounding it was the spectral forest of [Hatchetman's Spirit], and together they had turned the sci-fi interior into a fey forest.

The attack was a huge success, but Zac still couldn't help but worry as he glanced at the enormous cracks that had appeared on the walls. The powerful Memorysteel normally wouldn't have been

damaged to this point from the battle, but the metal in this section clearly wasn't being provided enough Base Power to recover. He knew that he would have to end this quickly unless he wanted to bring the whole roof down on his head.

"Join together!" one of the leaders desperately screamed, but Zac was relieved to see that six of the remaining warriors completely ignored the call as they fled through the gate on the other side.

But there were still twelve werewolves to deal with, each of them powerful enough to withstand the strike of [Nature's Punishment]. Certainly, none of them came out of the clash unscathed, but they still carried a great fighting spirit as they moved together. A radiant silver moon had already appeared behind their backs as they howled toward Zac, causing dense lunar energies to stream out of their bodies.

The moonlight congealed into an enormous Lunar Wolf that immediately lunged at Zac, and he felt a huge pressure bearing down on him. He didn't hesitate to activate the defensive charge of [Hatchetman's Spirit], but the shimmering barrier was quickly whittled down by an extremely piercing radiance that radiated from the spectral wolf's forehead.

Four chains shot out from the coffin that had appeared on Zac's back and they launched forward like black spears full of corrosion as Zac flooded them with the Fragment of the coffin. They pierced into the intangible wolf with enormous momentum, but it was like he was hitting a cloud. However, the radiant luster of the wolf somewhat dimmed from the black gases that spread from the chains, and the invasion caused a slight pause in the beast's advance.

The reprieve was enough for Zac to charge up his next massive skill, and a golden cloud spread out in a wave as a fifty-meter fractal blade swept out. The wave was rapidly diminished by the moonlight, but a second wave came crashing into the first just as the four chains slid out of the way. The two opposites of [Rapturous Divide] emerged in the warehouse the next moment, and both gold and black started competing with the silver for dominance.

The collision caused the whole room to shake, and cracks in the wall grew even further as Zac's newly erected corpse tree was cut in half and fell onto the ground with a deep thud. A few pieces of the wall and roof were actually completely dislodged from the shockwave, but they didn't fall down as Zac expected.

They rather were sucked up into the Void, leaving gaping holes just like the ones that were everywhere in the corridors. The scene intensified Zac's worries, but it seemed to have a far more profound impact on the few remaining werewolves as over half of them started running for their lives even if the spectral wolf managed to cancel out most of Zac's attack.

That left just four beastkin who seemed to be in a state of conflict between duty and fear, but Zac felt no such turmoil as he pushed forward. A brutal melee where [Verun's Bite] and the chains of [Love's Bond] turned into a dizzying blur resulted in the last of the werewolves, including the leader who had spoken up at the start, lying dead on the ground.

Zac sported some minor wounds and a nasty scar across his throat, but he was still in decent shape. His victory was all thanks to his initial blitz this time around. Zac had thought about the battle on the way

over here, and he realized something while talking with Leviala. These natives had a lot of weird items that Zac didn't understand, but that worked the other way as well.

The fat stack of talismans and the [Void Ball] had essentially put them in a reactive position while breaking their Lunar War Array, the greatest threat to Zac's large-scale attacks. After that it was just a matter of time before Zac was the last man standing. The werewolves weren't even given a chance to launch any of the technological weapons or traps they should have prepared in this place.

This wasn't the time to wallow in self-congratulatory revelry though, and he quickly snatched up the closest corpses of the werewolf leaders before he rushed over to his scouting squad. The walls of the room were all creaking ominously by this point, and Zac got a bad feeling when he remembered the fear in the eyes of the werewolves as they fled.

He had thought the fear was directed at himself in the heat of the battle, but he now had a feeling that he was overestimating his importance.

"Are you guys okay?" Zac panted as he started ripping apart the bindings that held the group in place.

The scouts were bound by Memorysteel chains that were fused with the walls themselves, but they definitely didn't contain the same restraining capabilities as the odd gizmo in his possession. Then again, the material was extremely sturdy by itself, and even Zac had to strain a bit to break the chains.

"We're fine. We knew that you'd come for us," one of the two Valkyries said as she got to her feet.

Zac could only weakly smile in response, too shamefaced to admit that he only found out about their situation by a coincidence. He could only redouble his efforts in freeing everyone, urged on both embarrassment and a mounting fear as the cracks in the walls kept spreading.

"We should hunt the last ones down before they bring back more people!" a man that Zac didn't recognize huffed as Zac broke apart his fetters. "Better yet, we should invade them... right ...back."

The man had begun speaking with surging momentum, but he barely managed to squeeze the last words out as Zac silenced him with a glare. The others looked at Zac with confusion, but there was no time to explain the mounting danger he felt.

"Wha-" the man stuttered.

"Just shut up and run," Zac said as he freed the last scout, the demon warrior.

However, it was too late.

A series of odd explosions erupted all along the roof, and Zac guessed it was the remaining Base Power in the wall that had been become unstable as the chamber had lost the last of its structural integrity. The blasts were the straw that broke the camel's back as the roof was ripped clean off and swallowed by the void. The atmosphere was still intact, but Zac didn't care about that as he felt a very familiar dread gripping his heart.

Not only that, but an immense pressure weighed down on him like a restrictive array had been activated.

"Run!" Zac screamed as he grabbed one of the scouts with his free arm while his chains grabbed another four.

Only the demon warrior was able to stand, and he carried the last scout on his back. However, the two only managed to take a few steps before a horrifying scene entered their eyes. Two tentacles reached down from the void, making their way toward Zac and the Demon warrior. The scene was scary enough by itself in conjuncture with the immense aura the appendages emitted, but Zac's terror reached even greater heights when he realized what the vines were made of.

Hands. Thousands of hands stitched together.