

The Fall 609

Chapter 609: Conflicting Truths

The group in front of them didn't exactly cause Zac's Danger Sense to go haywire, but he still didn't want to risk his sister getting hurt. So he pushed aside any reluctance over this no-win situation as he stomped down on the ground, pushing himself forward with enough force to cause a dent in the Memorysteel on the ground.

The next moment the whole shielded frontline of the Cartava Clansmen was sent flying as Zac slammed straight into their ranks while using [Love's Bond] as a wallbreaker, the sturdy coffin easily deflecting the beams shooting out from the handheld energy weapons. He had intentionally not used [Loamwalker] for that very purpose, to draw the enemies' attention toward himself.

A few projectiles still shot toward the others as well, but they were all capable of dealing with it. Only Leviala helplessly scrambled into a side corridor after realizing her attempts at reconciliation were futile. Kenzie had instead conjured what looked like a raincloud, and the beams actually dispersed as they entered it.

"Something's wrong with the swarm!" a man in the back of the Cartava platoon suddenly shouted.

"Fix it, NOW!" the middle-aged captain roared as he rushed to block Zac along with a group of cultivators.

The man was somewhere between middle and high E-Grade judging by his aura, but Zac still wouldn't look down on the enemy even if he didn't emit the aura of an elite like Void's Disciple. He just barely avoided the restraining tool of the werewolves in his first battle with the natives, and who knew what kind of hidden means the Cartava Clan possessed?

After all, Leviala had never given him any real details of the strength and means of her clan, to the point that he didn't even know they fought like Technocrats.

However, it was clear that not everyone in the clan leaned toward the 'Dao of Technology' as over half the squad emitted the condensed auras of traditional warriors. The captain and his squad of elites were definitely part of this group as they rushed toward Zac with killing intent seeping out of their bodies.

A massive pressure enveloped Zac as he prepared to meet the incoming cultivators, and it felt like he was ensconced in quicksand. He glanced down at his body and noticed he was covered in blue fractals, their glow mirrored in the eyes of three of the cultivators. The eyes of a few more lit up next, and Zac felt the world turning upside down and bend and distort.

He was initially worried that these cultivators were throwing him into another space-time or something with the help of their bloodlines, but he quickly realized that his warped surroundings were simply illusions. A few of the members of the Cartava elite squad were apparently the same sort of cultivators as Janos, mental support mages.

Those kinds of people were a bit troublesome, but it was a lot better than time-cultivators as far as Zac was concerned, and it somewhat confirmed what Leviala had said before. Only a select few had that ability in her clan, with the rest having a lower-quality version of the bloodline.

Zac's soul was thankfully a lot more powerful than the average Strength-based cultivator's thanks to the [Nine Reincarnations Manual] and his lucky encounters. Furthermore, while [Mental Fortress] was just an average mental defensive skill, it was enough to help him minimize the effect to the point that he could at least tell fake from real.

The first thing to welcome his escape from the illusions was two sets of shimmering grey eyes and the realization that some sort of stones had started to grow across his body. Two of the cultivators actually had Medusa eyes from the looks of it, their gaze slowly petrifying him.

Zac quickly understood what was going on; the Cartava Cultivators who didn't rely on Technology all seemed to have classes or at least skills that took advantage of their eyes. He guessed that most eye-related skills would have an increased effect for cultivators with an Ocular Bloodline, even if the actual usage of the Bloodline might be related to something different.

The cultivators seemed to somewhat relax after seeing Zac getting entrapped in layer after layer of restrictions, but they still maintained their gazes on him as they stopped twenty meters away. Only the captain rushed forward, wielding an exquisite sword in his hands. It wasn't a technocrat energy weapon, but Zac rather assumed it to be a Spirit Tool made from some reddish metal.

There was also a large red gem embedded in the hilt, making it possible for Zac to guess its origins; the gemlings on the other side of the base. A sharp aura that was all too similar to Zac radiated from the sword as the captain suddenly disappeared. The captain possessed a Late-Stage Seed of Sharpness. The swordsman appeared right next to Zac a moment later, the edge already ripping through the air on its way toward Zac's throat.

But the air around Zac suddenly started crackling as he unleashed his aura in full, further empowering it with his [Spiritual Void]. The stones on his body crumbled to dust and the blue restraining fractals shattered as Zac finally fought back in earnest. His body turned into a blur next as a coffin lid appeared to intercept the sword-strike.

A series of groans echoed out from the cultivator squad after Zac had forcibly broken their skills, and chaos erupted among the soldiers as Zac's immense aura slammed into them like a hammer. The captain's eyes widened in horror when he realized Zac had been going easy on them until now, and he quickly tried to flash away the moment he realized his execution had failed.

But there was no way Zac would allow that, and [Love's Bond] slammed into the captain with the full force of someone with over five thousand effective Strength. A deep thud was followed by the sound of bones breaking. The leader of the Cartava Clan's platoon was shot through his own ranks like a projectile, slamming into the Memorysteel wall with enough force to cause the whole corridor to vibrate.

The captain was still someone well into the E-Grade though, so Zac immediately caught up to him with the help of [Loamwalker] and punched him in the side of his head the moment the captain ricocheted off the wall. He slammed down into the ground causing another shudder to spread out across the area, and a mute silence spread among the Clan Cartava warriors as they looked at Zac with mute incomprehension.

Getting trapped earlier wasn't Zac simply getting caught unaware. On the contrary, he could have instantly broken the blue fractals covering his body just by using his superior attributes to force it, and one attack of [Rapturous Divide] would have instantly killed the ocular cultivators along with half the platoon. However, he had quickly decided against that, allowing the elite squad to keep going to display more of what kind of classes and tactics they used.

He still held a small hope that things could be salvaged peacefully even after all this, which was why he didn't just cut the captain in two, but he felt there was a real risk that his own army would be embroiled in a large-scale battle with these people in a few days. Any intelligence he gathered right now could be sent back, which hopefully would save some lives.

The momentum of the Cartava Clan had completely been quashed by the combination of their drones failing them and Zac using their leader like a punching bag. A few warriors in the back reacted the quickest, immediately starting running for their lives. However, they only got a few meters before the whole area turned into a hazy gray, like a dense fog late at night.

It was Ogras who had appeared out of nowhere and flooded the whole area with his shadows. The fleeing cultivators immediately found themselves caught by an endless number of shadow tendrils, and they actually sank into the shadows like half their bodies had been sent to another dimension. The Cartava warriors reacted instantaneously as they took out energy-knives that were able to cut straight through the shadows, and they desperately flailed about in an attempt to free themselves.

But shadows were intangible, and cutting them with a blade didn't really do much. They simply reformed and bound the warriors again. A few of the more powerful warriors did manage to free themselves one way or another, but they didn't even get a taste of freedom before they found themselves gored by a black spear hiding among the shadows.

Zac looked at the display with gleaming eyes. It felt like the Cartava warriors were shipwrecked sailors on a sea of shadows, and Ogras was a shark in the depths, striking from the darkness before immediately disappearing again. Zac felt that it was worth learning from the demon in this regard, especially for his second class. Fetters of Desolation was a class focusing on restraining and whittling down the enemy, just like Ogras was doing right now.

It wasn't too surprising that Ogras could so easily capture over a dozen people in an instant. Most of the warriors in the back of the platoon seemed to be responsible for the drones, and their 'weapons' had just been tablets and some weird helmets. Then again, the frontlines weren't doing any better even though they were manned by soldiers armed with proper energy weapons.

Thea had made her move as well, turning into a whirlwind that destroyed every piece of equipment in her path. The floor was already littered with broken components from everything from tablets to guns and even clothes. Everything that could be used as a weapon was either cut by the invisible blades or Thea herself, and any resistance resulted in streaks turning into bleeding wounds.

Less than half a minute had passed, but the Cartava squadron was already utterly crushed. The drones that had been silently hovering in the air until now suddenly started moving, forming an orderly line as they flew toward Kenzie. She simply took out a Cosmos Sack with a wide grin, and the machines flew straight into it one by one while Leviala stared at her with a flabbergasted look.

"Lay down your weapons, or we'll start killing," Zac roared when he saw the battle was over, and everyone immediately followed suit.

The soldiers were seated against the wall a minute later, unarmed and with a dozen of Kenzie's own Drones keeping watch. The others had already gathered again, with Leviala hesitantly standing between Zac's group and her clan members. She already looked a lot better compared to before, and it seemed she had overextended herself, running out of Cosmic Energy in her escape.

"Girl, how is your faction still standing?" Ogras asked with bemusement as he glanced at Leviala. "You better pledge allegiance to this guy fast, otherwise you'll just get eradicated even if you get out of this realm alive."

"These people are not our strongest warriors," Leviala muttered, though she looked a bit shamefaced at the result of the battle even if her clansmen were technically her enemies in this scenario. "We have a lot of powerhouses."

"More importantly," Zac said as he lifted the still-unconscious middle-aged man by his neck. "What's up with the bullshit this guy was spewing? I told you we were looking for an alliance."

Leviala sighed as she started explaining the situation back in her clan. It turned out that the werewolves hadn't just kidnapped Leviala, but also destroyed a few key buildings along with the corridors leading toward the Lunar Forest. The chaos had allowed the werewolves to slink away. Clan Cartava wasn't about to give up Leviala though, and they immediately decided to set out toward the Wasteland. But just as the first groups were about to set out a damning video emerged.

It was without audio, but it clearly displayed two werewolves talking with an unknown human and two demonkin in an abandoned warehouse.

The clan had already learned of Ogras' appearance somehow, and they quickly put two and two together. They believed Port Atwood and the Lunar Clan were working together, targeting Clan Cartava at this critical time.

"What, there's a video of our people conversing with Werewolves?" Zac said with confusion all over his face, and he turned to Ogras.

"Impossible," Ogras said with a shake of his head. "No one would be that stupid."

"It's true," Leviala said, her eyes flickering. "I saw the video myself after I returned."

"There's one simple explanation of how that's possible, apart from betrayal," Thea interjected as she took an all-too-familiar root, holding it so the captives couldn't see it.

"Impossible, our people have been rigorously tested," Zac said with a shake of his head.

"I know, but theirs haven't," Thea said as she looked at the captives.