

## The Fall 619

### Chapter 619: Despicable

A spectral forest rose from the ground as Zac flashed forward, the trees immediately giving him a second sight as he tried to close the distance to the Second Elder. Most of the Cartava Clan cultivators seemed to be leaning toward mage-classes, which meant that turning the fight into a melee was his best bet at ending things quickly.

The Second Elder frowned as he looked at the forest that had sprung up around him. He pushed his hand forward, causing hundreds of runes to appear, each of them seemingly made out of steel. Zac could somewhat guess what was going on. The Grand Elder used lightning as an element, his insights probably stemming from the Base Power that powered this place.

The Second Elder instead had focused on the Memorysteel itself for inspiration.

Zac was a bit surprised none of them seemed to have insights into space even with all the spatial rifts around them, but he guessed it was simply too hard to gain insight into that Dao as an E-Grade cultivator in this place.

A sudden pang of danger dragged Zac out of his thoughts as a metal arrow shot straight toward him, coming from the closest rune. It contained a tremendous force, and the air itself was frayed as it flew straight toward him. But Zac only glanced at it before refocusing on his enemy as a chain lashed out to intercept.

The sharp sound of metal colliding echoed out as chain and arrow clashed and a small shockwave erupted. The chain of [Love's Bond] was pushed away, but it was clearly Zac who came out victorious in the initial engagement. One of the links had a small white mark from where the arrowhead hit, but the whole arrow was disfigured as it fell to the ground.

One flash forward moved Zac almost a hundred meters, putting him just ten meters away from the old man. A radiant edge was already tearing through the air as [Chop] expanded to over fifteen meters, creating a vast kill-zone in front of him. The elder looked startled as he moved to run away, but he was far too slow. The blade bit into his torso before he could take more than a single step, instantly bisecting the old man.

However, Zac just frowned as the Second Elder supposedly died, and his worry was quickly confirmed as Zac found himself surrounded by over a hundred pitch-black spikes that reminded him of Alea's ultimate attack. The bisected old man turned into streams of metal the next moment shooting toward him with extreme speed.

Destroying all the spikes around him would be too annoying so he immediately activated [Loamwalker] to flash away, but he didn't even manage to take a single step before the two streams of metals reached his legs and turned into two manacles that felt as heavy as mountains. The sudden burden made him stumble, and the spikes shot toward him at that precise moment.

Zac's Danger Sense screamed at him to get away, and the veins on his forehead pulsated as he forcibly took a step forward and disappeared with the help of his movement skill. It felt like the muscles in his

legs would tear from the exertion, but a loud snap confirmed that he had forcibly broken the restrictive skills as he moved.

A green barrier appeared around Zac as he activated the first defensive charge of [Hatchetman's Spirit], just in time as he crashed through a dozen of the black spikes. The barrier barely held as Zac escaped the encirclement, a testament to how powerful the attack was when counting the number of spikes left behind.

He appeared fifty meters away, and he turned around just in time to see a large spatial tear being created by the hundred remaining spikes. They had actually ripped a hole into space when they stabbed toward a singular point, and the air twisted and distorted as the rift swallowed everything around it before space mended itself.

There was no time for Zac to regain his footing though as one arrow after another shot toward him from the runes all around him. Zac growled in annoyance as his chains turned into a blur, forming a defensive barrier even more effective than [Nature's Barrier]. It was something he had come up with some time ago, but it only worked when there weren't too many projectiles to deal with.

The chains kept him safe for the time being, but he knew that this wasn't a sustainable situation.

He had already spotted ten clones of the old man forming a circle around him, each of them forming different hand seals, no doubt preparing his next major attack. Massive outbursts of lightning and massive sigils clashing to his left was proof of a battle that was quickly reaching a fever pitch, and the three beasts to his right were already bloodied as the Tal-Eladar desperately held on for dear life.

The Second Elder had seized the momentum the moment Zac looked over at that very first arrow. It had given him a short window to teleport away while leaving behind a boobytrapped clone, even escaping Zac's improved senses from [Hatchetman's Spirit]. Zac knew he needed to break the stalemate, but it looked like the second elder wasn't actually trying to take him out. He was just probing him while stalling for time, waiting for the others to finish up their fights.

Unfortunately, Zac saw no simple quick fix. The clones were extremely life-like, and Zac couldn't actually tell which one was the real elder even with the help of [Cosmic Gaze]. Zac knew what he had to do, though he hated such tactics. But this was not the time to hesitate, and the lustrous halo of [Conformation of Supremacy] appeared behind his back while he also started infusing a storm of Cosmic Energy into [Nature's Punishment].

The axe of the axe-man appeared inside the halo, and Zac shot toward the closest avatar. It was shredded into pieces by one swing of his E-Grade skill, the ground itself turned into a deep gorge from the force generated by the halo. The clone wasn't the real elder this time either, and his body fell apart into liquid metal once more.

This blob didn't shoot toward Zac, but it rather rose into the sky as it absorbed the metal runes in the area, forming one massive fractal. Zac spotted a similar fractal as large as a fist suddenly appear on his robe, and he felt a tremendous pressure like he was bound by unseen fetters. It reminded him of those annoying spiderlings he had fought during the final battle of the second Beast Wave, where each spider that attached to him increased the gravity.

This one mark added over ten times as much weight on his body, but Zac was also not the same person as he was back then. He bore the weight without a change in expression as he flashed toward the second clone. This one was right at the edge of his fractal forest, and it was the closest one to the Cartava Army.

The second avatar was destroyed in a single swing as well, and another massive fractal appeared, just as expected. The strain on his body more than doubled, but Zac only snorted as he pushed his free hand forward. An enormous crack in the sky appeared, but not right above him. It was instead above the army just a few hundred meters away, and the large wooden hand emerged in all its glory.

Zac wasted no time as he rushed forward, running away from the encirclement and his spectral forest. He was surprised to feel that the restraints increased by a whole tier after he left the circle the elder's clones had set up, but he could still move almost freely supported by his almost inhuman amount of Strength.

Screams of confusion erupted among the natives as an emerald fractal appeared in the sky, immediately putting the soldiers under immense pressure. Confusion quickly turned to fear as a small sapling rapidly grew into a towering tree, with hundreds of branches shooting downward like spears.

It was like the tree had eyes as well, with the attacks only targeting the natives while avoiding the allied army of Port Atwood.

"Despicable!" the second elder roared, and he actually emerged out of the ground in the middle of the encirclement.

It was no wonder that Zac couldn't pinpoint his location. He was actually hiding underground, masking his aura while he let his clones fight for him. But Zac didn't care that the real elder had appeared as his eyes were peeled on a young man shouting orders in the middle of the army.

This was a battle for the survival of Earth, and if he needed to act despicably to get the job done, so be it. The second elder seemed to want to draw things out to tip the scales in their favor, but Zac had one card up his sleeve to force his hand; the elder's grandson. Zac had already spotted the man he suspected to be the one called Yvian some time ago. Furthermore, he was just an early E-Grade warrior, not a match to Zac at all.

Hundreds of barriers erupted as the soldiers tried to defend against the death from above, but the Zhix warriors didn't have any such worries as they launched another assault with unmitigated bloodthirst. The pitched battle between the two armies quickly turned to a bloodbath as the soldiers found themselves unable to deal with the pincer attack of both Zac and Zhix.

An enormous explosion erupted to his left, and Zac saw Billy appear out of nowhere to block the Grand Elder's attempt to reach his clansmen. A torrent of lightning bolts blasted out from the glowing eye behind the old man in an attempt to force Billy to give way, but the ten-meter giant released a thunderous roar as he slammed his gargantuan club into the ground.

The whole area shook like the whole mystic realm was about to split apart before a towering mountain rose from the ground to block the old man. A section mountain exploded in turn as six familiar balls shot out with shocking force, each of them exploding around the Grand Elder, drowning him in a ceaseless barrage of stone-shards reinforced by Zhix conviction.

It was the Anointed that launched a surprise strike while the elder was preoccupied with the plight of his clansmen, and their joint attack caused some serious wounds to appear across his body.

The three beasts were similarly unleashing ultimate strikes to block the infuriated old lady, leaving just the Second Elder to protect his clan. As expected, a towering metallic beast suddenly rose among the soldiers, looking a bit like the werewolf but wearing a spiked turtle shell on its back. The spikes turned into innumerable spears that slammed into the descending tree, ripping apart branches by the hundreds.

Zac only snorted as he kept infusing [Nature's Punishment] with even more Cosmic Energy, causing new branches to sprout and stab at the soldiers beneath. As for himself, two quick flashes put him right in front of the man he guessed was Yvian.

"No!" the man screamed as his face turned pallid in fear.

A barrier appeared in front of him, but it cracked before Zac's overhand swing even reached it, the massive pressure of [Conformation of Supremacy] alone enough to shatter it. However, the second elder appeared in front of Yvian out of nowhere, his whole body turning into a pitch-black metal covered in dense sets of shimmering fractals.

It was like he had turned himself into a war machine, and he stabbed his right hand forward while the other hand moved up to block Zac's swing. Zac's Danger Sense warned him of the huge force contained in the jab, but he didn't care at all as his eyes were filled with death as he stared at his targets.

Just as [Verun's Bite] was about to clash with the palm it erupted with tremendous force, far eclipsing anything he had displayed until now.

"Wh-!" the old man blurted, but it was too late.

A massive scar split the ground for over a hundred meters as Zac infused his attack with Fragment of the Axe, the first time since he arrived that one of his attacks were infused with the Dao. The sudden and shocking increase in power had been too much, and the steel-related Dao Fragment that the old man used was clearly just at early mastery.

A sharp pain spread in his side as the jab of the second elder managed to puncture Zac's body even with his high Endurance. However, the elder didn't follow up on his attack, and neither did Zac. Zac just took a step back to extricate the steely hand from his body before the wound rapidly started to close.

The two forms of Yvian and his grandfather only stood unmoving for a second before they split apart, and it was their deaths that fueled the activation of [Surging Vitality]. It would normally be impossible for Zac to use his healing skill in the middle of a battle, but there were just dead bodies all around him while Zhix elites had quickly formed a protective circle while he healed up.

It had been a gamble since the beginning, but it worked out in the end. There was something Zac had noticed the moment he stepped into this Mystic Realm; it almost felt like the Tower of Eternity in the sense that his connection with the Dao was extremely weak.

He was still able to push his Fragment of the Axe forward thanks to his earlier encounters, but he had already realized from his battles until now that none of his enemies really excelled in the Dao. The

downed elder was proof of that. He was no doubt hundreds of years old, yet he only had a Low-Grade Dao Fragment.

Perhaps this was because of the characteristics of the Mystic Realm or perhaps it was a result of the Dimensional Seed sucking up all the Origin Dao, but in either case, it gave him a hidden weapon. Thanks to hiding his cards during the whole battle, Zac was able to burst out with extreme force in an instant with the help of a High-Mastery Dao Fragment.

Leviala had no doubt warned of his power before, but by hiding his attainment while targeting Yvian he had created an opening. Still, there was no satisfaction in Zac's heart for dealing with the Second Elder this way. He knew that Ogras would be smiling with pride if he had seen Zac's tactic, but this wasn't how he wanted to deal with problems. His eyes gazed across the Cartava army that was completely crumbling by this point, and hesitation filled his heart. What now?

And it was at that point another prompt appeared in front of him.