

## The Fall 258

### Chapter 258: A Singular Goal

"It's an illusion array," Zac explained but corrected himself after seeing Billy's confused face. "A magic trick. There is actually no wall there, we can go through as well."

Zac also passed through a few times to prove his point, and Billy finally followed suit as well with wonder in his eyes. After passing through the array they entered a cavern that reminded Zac of the underground tunnels. Billy curiously poked the luminescent moss covering the roof and even started collecting it until Ylvas explained it wasn't worth any money.

"No guards or scouts?" Zac asked Ylvas as they walked through the empty tunnel.

"We felt it was too risky having people placed outside the illusion array since it would likely increase the chances of this place being found out. We, unfortunately, lost one of our hideouts and fifty good men that way to one of the Insectoids," Ylvas explained with a sigh. "Now we try to stay as nondescript as possible. However, my men know we have passed through the array," Ylvas explained.

The tunnels weren't endless like the ones far underground and they soon reached a large cavern where ten cultivators stood armed and ready. However, the moment they saw Ylvas they relaxed, and quickly greeted them with a smile. The next moment another 50 men appeared out of nowhere, startling both Zac and Billy.

"Alien-man's friends are magic too," Billy muttered with a subdued voice as he glared at the men with his club at the ready "Or are they ghosts?"

"They are not ghosts Billy, they simply hid with the help of arrays, like the one we passed," Ylvas explained.

"How are you people able to utilize so many arrays?" Zac asked with surprise. "Did you know about arrays before the integration or something?"

"Array disks," Ylvas explained. "We found a cache with these array disks early in the hunt and learned how to use them after some experimentation. No knowledge is needed to activate them. Unfortunately, we never found any strong ones. Perhaps it's too hard to imprint arrays on disks."

"I'd like to buy one of each of the disks you've found," Zac quickly said.

Those things would both be convenient for himself when he traveled, and it would also be good to have a few of them to study.

"You can just take them, I have a small hill of the things," Ylvas said and took out eight different disks. "Their effect is much weaker compared to the things you can buy from the Town Shops, and you need to supply them with Nexus Crystals. But they are not restricted by geography and are easy to use."

Zac picked up one of the disks and looked at the extremely fine inscriptions on its surface. It seemed a pretty high skill in both inscription and arrays was needed to create these things. While Zac and Ylvas discussed the disks most of the men who had been ready to ambush the intruders walked away, making the cave seem more like a campsite. Some were playing cards, while others were cultivating or resting.

Zac threw the disks into his Cosmos Sack and opened up his ladder to check up on the squad that he would work together with. The general strength of those present wasn't bad, though there were only four people in the top 100, and all of them were pretty far down. Then again these people had been hiding for a few days, meaning their actual strength might be higher than their positions indicated.

Most simply accepted Zac and Billy's presence without question since they were brought by Ylvas, but not everyone went back to their seats. Many eyes turned toward the two in curiosity. But the faces of the inquisitive ones quickly changed after a few seconds, likely when they noticed Zac's ladder positions.

Greed was apparent on the faces of many of them, and some hands even moved toward their weapons as from instinct. Zac frowned at the reaction, but he wasn't too surprised either. He didn't say anything and silently observed what would happen.

As for Billy, he didn't seem to understand the mood and was instead staring at a fire that had a huge spit of meat over it that looked just about done.

Soon it seemed some couldn't contain their greed any longer, and a large man sporting two swords on his back slowly walked over. Zac saw he had pretty decent ladder positions, holding the 64th spot on the Hunter ladder. After slightly bowing toward Ylvas he once again turned toward Zac.

"Leader, it's good that you are back. I see you've brought the walking treasure trove," he said before turning toward Zac. "That bastard emperor has almost gone mad looking for you. It must be burdensome to carry that much treasure by yourself. Why not share a bit with your new allies?"

"We have all been in the same hunt," Zac answered with a shrug. "The wealth we have gathered depends on our abilities."

"Is that right?" the man said with a grim smile. "I can't help but think of there being an element of luck as well. But luck can quickly turn to misfortune."

"Is that a threat?" Zac said with a deadpan face.

"I wouldn't dream of it, but wealth can be a curse," the man said with a sneer. "You never know when calamity strikes. But that's what having allies is for, no? Sharing the burden. We're stuck here together after all."

"I think I'll be fine. And make no mistake - I'm not stuck here with you. You're stuck inside here with me," Zac said as his heavy aura ripe with dense killing intent rolled out from him and drowned the whole cave.

The arrogant man desperately backed away after being inundated by the killing intent, his face as pale as a sheet. It was the same with the other cultivators as they looked at Zac with a mix of shock and horror. Even Beruv Ylvas seemed slightly taken aback by the ruthless aura, and he thoughtfully looked at Zac from the side before he spoke up.

"Fools, do you think one would gain those ladder positions by luck? Now don't mess around, they are the important allies I've arduously found. They will be the key in ridding our planet of the Medhin scourge," Ylvas said with a glare at the man who had taunted Zac. "If anyone causes trouble for our new friends you will be declared a traitor of Berum."

Zac simply nodded at Ylvas in thanks. However, he did note that the champion didn't do anything to stop that man until Zac made a showing of his power. Perhaps Ylvas wanted to gauge his personality or power better. Zac suddenly noticed that Billy was looking at him with huge eyes and his mouth slightly open.

"Uh, what's wrong?" Zac asked.

"That line was very cool. Can Billy use it?" Billy entreated.

"Sure, no problem," Zac nodded with a smile.

He smiled widely at Zac before he headed over toward the meat on the spit and unhesitantly snatched it and started eating. The man who had been preparing the meat glared at Billy, but after throwing a glance at Zac he chose to not speak up and instead took out another slab of meat from his Cosmos Sack with a sigh.

Ylvas walked over to a corner of the cave, and the cultivators around quickly made ample space for him. As soon as he sat down he ate a pill and closed his eyes. Zac initially wanted to follow him, but after seeing that the man needed to focus on recuperation he went over to Billy and sat down. He looked over to the man who spun the new slab of meat, and the man nervously nodded back and introduced himself as Taran.

"Do you have any information about the situation in the Medhin camp?" Zac asked.

The man threw a glance at Ylvas before he started talking with a shrug.

"Most of their forces have started to return to their mountains. Nenotheop sent out over a hundred squads to the outer parts of the hunt a week ago, and they are returning to provide the spoils," Taran explained. "We set up as many traps as we could to kill the scouts, but most made it back alive. They are hard to kill because of their War Arrays."

Zac nodded as he took out a strip of dried meat from his sack, making Taran sigh in relief.

"Do you have any information about the class and skills of the emperor and his top men?" Zac followed up.

The man quickly nodded and took out an information crystal.

"This is the top tier information crystal from the Omniscient Eye. It's from before the hunt, but the information should be mostly correct," he said as he handed it over to Zac.

Zac immediately recognized the name Omniscient Eye. The cultivators from Berum he met right at the start had mentioned him or her, though they had no idea about that person's real identity. They only suspected the person to be a someone from the Medhin planet who had defected when the integration took place.

This crystal held far more information than the brochure that those cultivators had though, making Zac quite shocked. As far as he knew there was no one on Earth able to create information crystals this elaborate yet, meaning this Omniscient Eye should be quite the genius.

The information on Nenotheop was quite extensive, though much of it was marked as speculation and most was about his history and life. However, it was known that the emperor's weapon of choice was his spear and that he had some sort of warrior class. Both strength and speed were marked as 'Exceptional'.

Only one skill was mentioned, and it was called [Spearstorm]. The emperor had used it when he had singlehandedly massacred a whole army by himself. His spear had turned into a blur, punching holes in everyone close to him. No one within 100 meters had been safe, and the only survivors were those who fled fast enough.

Not much else was said about him since he had never been forced to use his full strength so far, at least not in public. As for Vasidas, it was only mentioned he was suspected to be a mage-class, but he'd never fought in public. Finally, there were a lot of generals and captains described in the crystal, but after a brief scan Zac knew they wouldn't pose a challenge for him.

Zac handed back the crystal to the man on the opposite side of the fire and started talking with Billy for a bit. He also considered going out to kill some beasts while Ylvas rested, but in the end he decided against it. One extra day of grinding wouldn't make a big difference in the long run, and he didn't want to ruin the plans by being spotted.

Zac had already gained another level while he traveled here, bringing him to level 63. He even was even halfway to level 64, so if their operation was a success he might gain another level before the hunt was over.

Instead, he rested and went over all his newly acquired power-ups. Resting also helped with his mind a bit. It had been hurting since he overextended himself down in the caverns, but the headache had finally abated. After a while, the familiar thunderous snores echoed from next to him, bringing Zac out of his reverie.

The sounds echoed through the caves, drawing angry glares from everyone. Zac could only helplessly shrug his shoulders. Before he was faced with a mutiny Zac quickly took out one of the array disks he had just received and activated it by placing a few F-Grade crystals in the sockets. He placed the disk in front of Billy, and the giant suddenly disappeared, making the cavern grow quiet again.

"Taran, how long until we start?" Zac asked.

"Between half a day and a full day, depending on Lord Ylvas. He needs to be in top condition to fight that old monster," Taran whispered back as he carefully checked a quiver of arrows.

Zac nodded and once again closed his eyes. Since he didn't have anything to prepare he simply pondered on the Dao while resting, especially the two new ones he had gained. The hours quickly passed until it was finally time to start the assault. There were no rousing speeches or waving of weapons in the air. Ylvas simply stood up and looked over the 50 men in the cavern.

"It is time," was all he said with a somber face as he started to walk toward the exit.

One by one the Berum resistance fighters stood up and started to stream out behind Ylvas. Zac cracked his neck and stood up as well. He hadn't made any real improvements during the short meditation. He

didn't know why, but it felt like the Dao had been far more elusive since he arrived at the Eastern Trigram Sect. It was much easier to ponder on the Dao back on Earth, and he couldn't wait to get back.

He walked through the illusion array surrounding Billy, who still contentedly snored away.

"It's time Billy. Let's go save Thea," Zac said after he managed to wake the giant.

Soon 67 warriors walked through the forest with a singular goal in mind - to slay an Emperor.