

The Fall 396

Chapter 396: Aftermath

A dense killing intent suffused the whole hall, causing the numerous guests of the Pill House to look over with consternation after hearing the roar. The source was obviously the interloper, who looked angry enough to spontaneously combust. His eyes had turned completely bloodshot, and he was already reaching for his Cosmos Sack.

Rasuliel was inwardly delighted the way things turned out. Sometimes Luck was as important as skill, and he had no doubt been helped by his massive pool of 52 Luck today. Who would have thought that the scoundrel who somehow snatched the Thayer Consortia from underneath his uncle's hands would present himself here?

Furthermore, he was only some no-name cultivator who lacked any proper connections to enter this place the right way. And better yet, he was a hothead who only needed a little bit of goading to lose control.

He couldn't believe a person dumb enough to emit killing intent inside the Zethaya Pill House would be able to get inside, let alone snatch a Mercantile License that their family had targeted for decades.

The arrays in here would block any attempts at retaliation, allowing him to freely kill the interloper without repercussions. The biggest risk to his plans was if this Zac character crushed his token and fled, but as he looked at the man who seemed to have lost all rationality he knew his gambit had proven successful.

As soon as the fool got himself killed he would hopefully be able to glean the whereabouts of those damn Sky Gnomes from his belongings. This level of contribution to the clan was almost at an elder-level, and he couldn't imagine the bump in resources he would enjoy when presenting the signet and this man's body to his uncle.

The aura of the man in front of him kept rising, and even Rasuliel started to feel some pressure. But even then he wasn't overly worried. Someone who could both get through the entrance array and even block Rudrik's strike was strong, but the Zethaya had spent hundreds of thousands of years to strengthen this place to the limits of what the System allowed.

"I apologize for the harsh words from my friend here," Boje said with a frown. "But I urge you to remember where you are. Violence will not be tolerated within these walls."

But the warning fell on deaf ears as Zac's aura kept increasing, and Rasuliel started to frown when he sensed an extremely sinister energy within it. It was unlike anything he had encountered before, and it elicited an intense sense of danger.

'This guy mentioned some modifications that pushed one's power beyond the natural limits. Has this lunatic actually done the same to himself?' Rasuliel thought, some worry finally creeping into his heart.

The worry quickly turned into a primal fear in Rasuliel's heart as the aura of the man suddenly skyrocketed as a black rune appeared on his forehead. Lines started to cover his whole body as well, creating a pathway reeking of destruction.

Rasuliel suddenly found himself falling backward as he coughed up a mouthful of blood. Just looking at the fractal caused his Soul to get cut, and a glance indicated that Boje had suffered the same fate.

"Stop!" Boje roared as the whole Pill House hummed with power like a beast waking up from its slumber.

One restriction after another appeared in the air, and defensive treasures of inestimable value created an inescapable net around the man who still stood rooted to his spot. But a wave of unadulterated destruction rippled out from his body, and the massive arrays cracked like they were some cheap talismans bought from a flea market.

Thoughts of escape filled Rasuliel's mind, but streams of terrifying power ensconced the whole lobby, cutting off any path of retreat. Rasuilel could only reluctantly turn back toward the human-shaped monster, and he took out a small tube from his Spatial Ring. There was no way he would be able to crush his token and escape from this evil star in time.

He could only bet it all on the cursed object in his hand.

Pain with enough urgency to jolt him awake plagued Zac's body. He found himself bruised and battered in the middle of a huge pile of rubble, every part of his body hurting beyond imagination.

His vision was a bit blurry, but he still saw the towering trees from [Hatcheman's Spirit] dissipating around him. When had he activated that skill? And why did it look so different from when he tried it out back on earth? The leaves and trunks shouldn't be black.

And where the hell was he? He had been inside the luxurious lounge of the Zethaya Pill House just a second ago.

A broken-off head of a statue depicting some unknown mythological creature jogged Zac's memory awake. It had been the centerpiece of one of the fountains inside, but now the fountain was gone, replaced with broken pieces of stones and the crushed remnants of the furniture who sat around it.

Zac's mind still had some problems connecting two and two, and his head slowly swiveled around to take in the surroundings. A couple of familiar faces, many with minor wounds and looking haggard, stared back at him from a respectable distance, undisguised horror evident on their faces. It was the other customers and residents of the Zethaya that had spectated his entrance to the Pill House.

Even further back a small crowd had gathered, likely people who were visiting Tower Square. No one dared to take a step forward, and some were even running away after Zac trained his eyes in their direction.

Zac couldn't bother with the onlookers as his muddled mind tried to compute what the hell was going on. He knew he had been bested by the Splinter once more, and it had caused him to completely lose control when he heard the taunts from that Rasuliel guy.

Normally he might have been annoyed, but he still had years to find a cure for Alea. He wouldn't risk everything at this juncture just to forcibly steal a treasure. Doing so would cause unneeded enmities and

more trouble than it was worth. But the accumulated anger from the Splinter of Oblivion had pushed his rage to unprecedented heights, ruining his plans completely.

Just thirty meters away a young man in a blue robe lay huddled in a fetal position with multiple layers of arrays shimmering around him. Zac realized it was Boje who was still fine albeit somewhat worse for wear. And just in front of him he could see the outline of another body.

He arduously looked down, but he almost immediately regretted it due to two reasons. The first reason was the huge wound that had mangled a large section of his torso, which put both his bones and innards on open display.

The second was the bloody head he held in his right hand, where his fingers were completely entrenched. His index and ring-fingers were pushed all the way through his eyes, and the sockets were still leaking some mix of blood and brain matter. His thumb meanwhile was inserted in the victim's mouth, making it look like he was holding a bowling ball.

The head wasn't connected to a body, but a grisly and broken spine dangled from beneath. However, a matching headless corpse lay at Zac's feet, clearly indicating who it was.

Rasuliel Tsarun.

Zac groaned as he knew that he had really caused a shitstorm this time around, but he didn't feel too broken up about it. He obviously regretted causing this trouble, but Rasuliel was targeting him for some reason. This random guy had caused him so much trouble for no reason at all, and he didn't feel too broken up about killing him. People died for far less every day.

He irreverently threw away the head before quickly popping one of his best healing pills while he activated his Dao of Trees. His wounds were nothing to scoff at even with his terrifying constitution, and he needed to quickly restore his condition.

The trouble wasn't over just because he had killed his enemy. There was no doubt in Zac's mind that he had been the one to make the first move, meaning that retribution would come soon enough. Ogras appeared the next second as if reading his thoughts.

"We need to flee. Now," the demon said with grit teeth.

His usual lackadaisical expression was nowhere to be seen, replaced by a mask of horror.

"The tokens?" Zac asked with a hoarse voice.

"The two of us were judged complicit of your madness, we're stuck here," Ogras said, waving the limp body of Galau in his arms. "This useless guy got so scared that he fainted when you tore down the whole netherblasted building. Throwing out that guy in the beginning wasn't enough?"

"Let's enter the Tower then," Zac said, opting to save the explanations for later. "People seem shocked enough to stay away."

"It just takes one, then all hell breaks loose. The bounty on your head is crazy," Ogras lamented.

Zac nodded and the two unhesitantly sped toward the large platform in front of the Tower after Ogras gripped the body of Rasuliel with a shadow tentacle. There wasn't any actual door to enter, but rather a teleportation array that took you inside.

He figured that they would be fine as long as they managed to get on the platform in one piece. What happened when they exited tomorrow was Future-Zac's problem. He would have 100 days to figure out that mess.

The demon's words, unfortunately, proved prophetic. One impulsive cultivator started rushing after them, and with that the floodgates were opened. Many chose to stand back, but more than half the remaining warriors on the square started rushing toward Zac, and a few cultivators emerged from the nearby buildings as well.

The fact that he looked half-dead with mortal wounds likely emboldened quite a few of the people who had an eye on whatever the System offered for his death. But they had drastically underestimated his constitution, and he still had some fuel left in his tank.

Better yet, he realized he had activated [Hatchetman's Rage] during his rampage, and he still benefitted for its effects. He also still had his most powerful skill. He had apparently torn down the building without using either [Deforestation] or [Nature's Punishment] somehow. Perhaps it was the other guys who did the heavy lifting in the destruction they caused.

He clearly had activated [Hatchetman's Spirit] since he saw the trees just as they dissipated, but the effects of that skill weren't really offensive. He had a hard time seeing himself managing to destroy the Pill House just by activating that skill unless he had misunderstood its uses when he tested it. Had he used it by instinct to avoid certain death?

There was the issue of the appearance of the trees though. They looked corrupted for some reason, but he didn't have time to analyze it before they were gone. He had only tried out the skill once on Mystic Island, and he wasn't sure of all its uses just yet. Perhaps it changed appearance due to circumstances just like [Nature's Punishment].

He would have to experiment some more inside the tower. Now was not the time. There were more pressing issues to deal with, such as the swarming bounty hunters right on their heels. His body was full of complaints, but Cosmic Energy started to churn through his body.

The huge axe of [Deforestation] appeared in the sky above, but its powerful aura only managed to intimidate a scant few. The rest looked like they had eaten stimulants as they kept running toward him, and the whole square shuddered with power from their skills.

Zac had no compunctions about finishing what he started since these people wanted to kill him out of greed. His body screamed in protest from the exertion, but he felt that [Hatchetman's Rage] still had over ten seconds on the clock. It would be enough to do what needed to be done.

This time he wouldn't hold back as he did against the undead horde, and the Fragment of the Axe Effortlessly slipped into the huge hatchet in the air, causing a terrifying increase in its aura. A few with discerning eyes immediately turned to flee for their lives, but many still kept going.

A small shudder swept out across the square as the hatchet finished its trajectory, and the clamor died down in a second. Most of the attacks aimed at Zac were completely obliterated, with the few remaining losing most of their power. Ogras managed to clear those out with a few shadow-blasts.

However, the results were not quite as impressive as Zac had imagined in his rage-addled brain. Only a dozen died from his attack, while an equal number sported pretty grievous wounds. A small part in the back of his mind reminded him that these were the elites that stood at the peak of the whole sector. Just pushing them back with your own power was a huge accomplishment, let alone killing a bunch of them.

Zac coughed a mouthful of blood as activating the skill in his current condition had put an even worse strain on his body. The gristly wound in his side painted the ground he stepped on red, and he started to feel woozy.

Unfortunately he didn't manage to deter everyone on the square just with that single swing. In fact, a few people with extremely dense auras had appeared as though out of nowhere, each of them looking like a god of war as they closed in on the three. Going by Zac's pathetic appearance they no doubt believed he was an arrow at the end of its flight.

His time was running out on his buff, so Zac could ignore his pain and unleash the second swing as well. The shocking [Infernal Axe] appeared in the sky above, and a coruscating wave of flames ripped out across the square, slamming straight into the attacks that came their way.

A chaotic mess of fire and dozens of other elements fought for supremacy in the square, causing a shockwave that launched Zac off his feet. It was at this time the timer for [Hatcheman's Rage] dissipated, causing a wave of exhaustion and pain to wash over him.

A sneaky cultivator seemed to have been waiting for this opportunity, and he appeared out of nowhere from the shadows with a sinister dagger poised to strike. But those very shadows immediately turned on the assassin and ripped him to pieces.

Zac's sight was starting to blur, but a storm of fractal blades blasted through the wall of flames from [Deforestation] and flew their way. Zac could immediately sense they contained the energy from a Dao Fragment, and some despair crept into his heart. He was completely spent, and he knew that defense wasn't Ogras' strong suit.

Swapping class was out of the question as well, the blades moved far too quickly. But the square was luckily only so big, and they had already reached their destination. With the help of Ogras moving them through the shadows they found themselves atop the platform, and the fragment-imbued blades hit an invisible wall.

The hunters stopped in their tracks as they looked at Zac with greed in their eyes. But they were unwilling to enter the platform since that would only send them into a separate version of the trial. They were no doubt more interested in staying until he reemerged. Zac looked down at the people with his bloodshot eyes, some residual anger reigniting when he saw their greedy expressions.

"I will for-," Zac said with a hoarse voice that echoed across the square, but his grand proclamation was cut off as they were teleported away.

