

The Fall 477

Chapter 477: Meteors

The Bishop's golden array lit up the next moment, and a fiery meteor several times larger than the one that had slammed into the City Shield begun its descent, its fall accompanied by a rain of fire so hot that the air itself was incinerated.

Zac realized these maniacs weren't called zealots by chance, and over a hundred of their own would die if that thing slammed into the ground in the confined space of [Profane Seal].

"We wanted to use this strike on the native Lord, but taking out an elite from the five cursed races is a worthy trade," the Bishop laughed from the sky.

The meteor rammed into the miasmic fractal acting as a dome for the miasmic cage the next second, and Zac knew in an instant that it would only hold for so long before cracking. Zac started running toward the edge of the cage along with the surviving cultists, but he was forced to carve a path of blood as the lunatics seemed ready to sacrifice their lives just to keep him within the blast zone.

However, the normal cultists had no means to even impede Zac's escape, and he reached the edge of his cage just as the azure fractal broke apart, transmitting a blowback to Zac that made him stumble for a second.

The meteor regained its momentum in an instant, but it actually managed to change its trajectory as it went straight for Zac. He growled in annoyance as he activated [Immutable Bulwark] and infused it with the Fragment of the Coffin. The fractal wall grew to its maximum size, reaching almost twenty meters across, but it could still barely cover a third of the meteor as the two collided.

Zac felt like he was being subject to the gravity of a sun as he was locked in a battle of man versus nature. His whole body trembled from the strain as the pressure was transmitted from the skill into his body. A few zealots tried to take the opportunity to strike while Zac was occupied, but they found themselves turned into desiccated husks from a few spectral chains that hovered around Zac like sentinels.

The meteor thankfully lost its momentum fast enough, and Zac pushed the fiery ball toward the largest clump of soldiers with a grunt, and it landed among them with a massive outburst of flames that rushed in every direction. The soldiers had desperately tried to erect some golden shields to stop the meteor as well, but they were nowhere near as powerful as Zac and his fractal bulwark.

The shields had broken in an instant and the cultists were either turned to paste or burned alive.

Screams could be heard from every direction, and not even Zac was completely unscathed even if he had managed to change the trajectory of the array. He had lost a large chunk of Miasma to maintain the massive shield as it was pressed against the flaming meteor, and he was still beset by the waves of flames that instantly covered the entire cage after the impact.

He also felt that the whole cage was being pushed toward its breaking point. The dome in the sky breaking had already damaged [Profane Seal], and cracks now covered both the towers and gates of the skill. The only thing maintaining the skill right now was probably the infusion of energy from the fifteen spectral chains.

However, Zac didn't enjoy that kind of energy boost as [Fields of Despair] was completely countered by the all-consuming flames. The miasmic haze hadn't been present at all during the battle, and he hadn't gotten even a smidgeon of Miasma from the large number of killed zealots. It was the first time he had met a perfect counter to so many of his skills in his Undying Bulwark form, and he felt it wasn't by chance that the Church of Everlasting Dao and the Undying Empire were such bitter enemies.

Zac quickly readjusted his shield so that it shrunk just to the point that it covered his body. It was just in time as well as waves of fire and molten stones shot toward him. The heat was blistering, but it was somewhat manageable by circulating the Fragment of the Bodhi through his body. His first instinct was to dispel the cage and regroup, perhaps even change back to his human form to gain some ranged capabilities to take out the bishop and the stragglers.

However, Zac eventually decided against that course of action. Instead of fleeing from the scorching heat of the meteor, he rather ran toward it. The ground shuddered beneath his feet as he ran as quickly as his bulky transformation allowed, and he ignored the burning heat that was transmitted straight through his armor as he started scrambling up the burning meteor.

The Bishop was still floating in the air, the flames seemingly having no effect on him, and he started to rise even higher when he noticed Zac's approach.

There should no doubt be a limit of how long an E-Grade warrior could stay in the sky, but Zac wasn't willing to let the Bishop run amok until he ran out of steam. He wanted to end things quickly since his sister was waiting for him, but he was out of offensive treasures that could kill the flying man in one go.

Hoisting himself into the air with the spectral chains had already failed spectacularly as well, so he could only move as quickly as he could until he reached the top of the meteor to use it as a springboard before it was too late. The bishop launched a storm of flames in his direction, but he simply punched through them as he jumped toward the lizardman in the sky.

The meteor cracked beneath Zac's feet as he put everything into the hulking leap, and his arm was already swelling in size in preparation for the final strike. The Bishop snorted and flexed his wings, but ten spectral chains whipped at him from behind to push him down. It was the final hurrah of the spectral chains before [Profane Seal] was destroyed by the flames.

Eight of the chains were incinerated as they tried to destroy the radiant sun that shielded the Bishop, but the sacrifice released a dense storm of Miasmic gases that allowed the final two chains to pass straight through the globe of fire unscathed. The Bishop was forced to stop ascending to avoid the attack, which kept him in Zac's trajectory.

The wings of the cultist suddenly his own body in an embrace and Zac realized the man was using some sort of movement skill. However, that was just what Zac hoped for and he immediately swung his axe as he saw a burst of flames appear in front of him. The massive bardiche fell, cutting straight through a golden fractal and luxuriant armor.

The large meteor lost most of its heat in an instant, and three thuds echoed out across the battlefield as Zac and the two bisected pieces of the Bishop landed on the scorched ground. A large surge of energy entered his body, but he also felt a backlash as the miasmic cage finally broke apart.

Zac would have thought that seeing their leader getting cut in two would douse the fighting spirit of the surviving zealots, but he had severely underestimated just how crazy these people were. Most of them started emitting extremely condensed fires from their mouths and eyes, and they heedlessly ran toward him as their bodies started swelling.

Some fell onto the ground before they even got close to Zac, their bodies turning into bloated balloons before exploding into cascading flames. It reminded Zac of the man that had exploded when he saved Kenzie from the New World Government at the border town. The whole area shuddered as dozens of eruptions went off one after another as the soldiers tried to bring Zac with them down to hell.

The pitch-black armor from [Vanguard of Undeath] was already in a haggard state after climbing atop the meteor, and the blasts were quickly ripping apart the remaining layers. Zac blocked out the attacks he could with [Immutable Bulwark], whereas the few remaining skeletons absorbed some of the attacks for him.

Thankfully enough the battlefield turned quiet soon enough, with just him and a few dying cultists remaining.

His hair was singed clean off and burns covered a large part of his body, but one of the two invading armies were dealt with at least. The cultists hadn't even managed to harm him apart from some surface burns, but they had been a surprisingly hard nut to crack. It looked like most, if not all, of the Incursion restrictions were gone by this point.

Normally he would have wanted to sit down and go over the battle at this juncture, as it felt like he had gained a lot from the fight. But there was no time, and Zac turned back to his human form before he walked back through the burning wreckage toward Port Atwood's Wall.

He jumped up with a grunt, appearing next to the demon captain and a few Valkyries that had waited for his return.

"I've dealt with the leader and the army, but be careful," Zac said as he cracked his neck. "There might be more hiding."

Harvath slowly nodded as he looked out across the destruction outside the wall, mute disbelief apparent in his eyes.

"Have you found anything about the array jamming?" Zac asked as he took out one of his healing pills to deal with the burns.

"I'm sorry, we didn't dare to leave the wall while you fought in case we would become a liability. We'll start cleaning up the battlefield and looking for the array immediately," Harvath said as he started awake.

"That's fine," Zac nodded as he took out his new flying treasure, the large inscribed leaf. "I'm heading inland. Be careful, most of the cultists chose to blow themselves up, but perhaps there are reinforcements on the ship."

"We'll be careful," Harvath nodded. "Don't worry and let us deal with the aftermath."

Zac jumped on the treasure the next moment, and it soundlessly rose to the sky before it shot away with enough speed to rip the clouds in two.

It felt a bit bad to leave Port Atwood while there still were enemies remaining. He had dealt with the army, but who knew what other things the cultists had planned. It was all-too-apparent just how far they were willing to go to take out their enemies, and he wouldn't be surprised if they had more nasty surprises in store for his island.

However, there was only one of him, and he needed to prioritize where to strike for maximum effect.

The speed of Zac's new flying treasure was just shocking, and he wasn't sure whether he would have been able to hang on if it wasn't for the protective array that blocked out any wind. He didn't have any means to make an exact measurement, but he felt that the leaf would be able to keep up with a modern fighter jet.

At least it felt like he moved a lot faster compared to when he had flown in a commercial airplane before the integration.

It wasn't all thanks to the high-quality craftsmanship of the vessel though. He had actually noticed that he could infuse the leaf with the Fragment of the Bodhi, which boosted the treasure's speed by around 30%. He even believed he could push the thing even further if he had some Nature-Attuned crystals to feed into the sockets rather than normal E-Grade Nexus Crystals.

It would normally have taken Zac hours to reach Azh'Rodum by foot, even if he used [Loamwalker] to speed up, but he was closing in on the center of the island after just 15 minutes of travel. He was anxious to reach the demon stronghold, as he didn't want to repeat the tragedy of arriving just a few seconds too late again.

Finally, he saw the battlefield ahead, or rather the massive clouds of miasma that covered a huge section of the northern parts of the island. The undead forces had no doubt set up a large array of Unholy Beacons to form such a vast cloud, but he frowned in confusion when he saw that there wasn't much of a battle raging.

There was a hovering line of sentries protecting the whole flank of Azh'Rodum, and there were over a hundred craters on the ground outside, along with a few scorched bodies. It looked there had been a few minor skirmishes that had been ended with laser-beams by his sister, but the complete lack of damage to the town fortifications indicated that the undead army wasn't even straining itself to take over the town.

However, the defenders were desperately launching attacks at an azure shield from the walls of Azh'Rodum, with dozens of projectiles hitting the barrier every second. It almost felt like the roles of invader and defender had been swapped. Zac guessed that something was brewing within the cloud of miasma that needed to be dealt with, and quickly judging by the fervor of the attacks.

He didn't even touch down inside the town to get a grasp on the situation, but he rather chose to fly straight toward the miasmatic shield. Just when he was a hundred meters from the shield he pushed off while simultaneously stowing away the treasure. Tremendous amounts of Cosmic Energy swirled around him as he shot toward the shield while [Verun's Bite] drenched the area in a bloody hue.

This time he would be the meteor.