

The Fall 618

Chapter 618: Path to Freedom

Zac blanched when he saw over a thousand drones shooting straight toward them. Most of the machines thankfully held their position, but he had felt the power of just a handful of spider balls self-destructing just a few hours ago. He understood all-too-well that the harried defensive shield wouldn't provide much protection against a blast of that magnitude.

"Can you deal with this wave? I have an idea on how to deal with the rest!" Kenzie hurriedly said, and Zac grit his teeth before he nodded.

The coffin appeared on his back almost instantly, and a thick cloud of pitch-black gases emerged from it as Zac shot out one max-sized fractal blade after another. The others on the wall-walk desperately tried to help thin the numbers of drones as well, and one massive explosion after another incinerated the air itself outside the barrier.

Unfortunately, there were just too many of them, and the barriers of the defensive drones protected them as well. Only Zac was powerful enough to destroy shields and drones alike, but even then they only managed to destroy a third of them before the machines were upon them.

A majestic demoness had thankfully already appeared outside the barrier by that point. It was [Death's Embrace], the final card up Zac's sleeve. He had hoped to save it for later, but the Mystic Realm kept forcing him into one desperate situation after another. Alea's opened arms wide in what looked like a welcoming hug, and the drones actually seemed to be attracted by the gesture.

They were spread out into small squads of defenders and attackers before, likely to avoid getting taken out by one massive attack, but they all turned to move straight toward the demonic avatar. Zac could clearly sense them being dragged from some mysterious force of the avatar though. One explosion after another erupted in her embrace, but they were muted like the fiery outbursts were sucked straight into a black hole.

A small sphere of fire and steel quickly grew in Alea's arms until it was almost too big for her to contain. There were still over a hundred machines left, but Zac knew that the skill had reached its limits. He quickly gave the order, and the avatar's jaw unhinged as she swallowed the massive ball before returning turning into a mist that receded into the coffin.

Zac was already prepared, and two streaks of light flickered in front of the wall. Two clouds, one gold and one black, could be seen for just an instant before space split in two and destroyed the remaining suicide drones in one go. Zac exhaled in relief when he saw that the first group was dealt with before he quickly scanned his Spirit Tool. He was worried that something would go wrong after [Love's Bond] swallowed a bunch of drone scraps and fire, but it looked like the coffin really could eat anything.

Alea had still not as much as sent him an emotion or impression like Verun often did, so Zac couldn't tell whether feeding her things this way was beneficial or detrimental. But that was a worry for later as a second squad was already setting out toward them, this one more than twice as big.

"I'm not sure I can block this without creating some massive fallout," Zac whispered with worry to his sister who was tapping away with such speed that her fingers had turned into a blur.

"I got it!" Kenzie shouted. "I'll knock them all out for a few seconds. Get ready to destroy them. I will not be able to do help you for a while after that. My... computer... will need to recharge."

Zac looked at Kenzie with surprise, but he quickly understood what she meant. It sounded like she or Jeeves had developed some sort of energy discharge aimed at Technocrat machines, and it was powered by Jeeves himself. Zac wasn't sure how to feel about that. It was one thing for the AI to help her with the tech side of things and give cultivation pointers, but now it was starting to directly weaponize itself as well?

Where would it end?

He knew that he couldn't be picky at a moment like this though, and he nodded at her to go ahead as he started to charge up [Deforestation]. He had decided to go all-out from the get-go considering that this mechanized army might actually be the strongest force of the Cartava Clan. Kenzie sighed as she shot a forlorn look at the vast repository of weaponry she wouldn't be able to steal before a sharp red light shot out of her eyes as she rose up in the air.

Her face turned into a callous mask as she looked down at the mechanized army outside the gates, like an emperor looking down on its subjects. She placed her palm on the tablet in her grip before throwing it out toward the incoming horde. The tablet exploded after just a few meters, releasing a small wave that Zac barely could discern.

It didn't look like much, but it was extremely effective. The hundreds of red shields covering the army disappeared in an instant, and the machines all stopped in their tracks as the drones started to drop from the sky. Zac was already on the move by that point as he jumped down from the wall and rushed toward the army with all the speed he could muster without activating [Loamwalker].

"Stop him!" someone roared from within the mechanized army, but the Cartava Clan's caution was working against them now that Zac and Kenzie had arrived.

They had wanted to let their robot armies pave the way for them while they conserved their strength, but they ended up in a position where they were unable to intercept Zac as he swung his arm and then swung it again as two massive axes almost superimposed on each other.

A ripple spread out through the exposed machines before thousands of deep cuts appeared out of nowhere. Many of the falling drones were directly destroyed while the larger robots on the ground just got their plating shredded. The mechanical army didn't even get a chance to wake up before a wave of flames hit them next, scorching and shredding everything that was still standing.

Just like that, the foundation that had held Clan Cartava safe from the other natives was gone, utterly destroyed because of the deadly combo of Zac and his sister. An army made up of over ten thousand drones and thousands of other weapons were destroyed in an instant, but that wasn't Zac's main goal.

He rushed forward through the wreckage, his eyes trained on the chaotic defensive line behind the inferno. He spotted a few scorched corpses among the burned metal scraps, no doubt Datamancers hiding among the machines.

But those people weren't his concern any longer, his eyes were already trained on the true army of his enemies. The Cartava Clan had let their machines attack the base for hours by this point, and they had

clearly grown complacent after dealing with the wolves. They had no proper shields up since the defensive drones stationed at their front lines were still malfunctioning, and many seemed to be frozen in stupor upon seeing their whole robot army being destroyed in an instant.

Zac felt some hesitation for a second, but he quickly pushed it aside as he emerged through the flames like a god of war. The enormous pitch-black Axe of Desolation appeared above his head, and it clove the air in a horizontal arc. A massive cloud of destruction billowed toward them, as if Zac's judgment upon the Cartava Clan had taken form.

The wave of desolation moved deceptively fast, hitting the frontlines of Clan Cartava before the drones had a chance to reset themselves the quick-witted cultivators had erected some shields by themselves, but the cloud easily slipped through the cracks. There were no screams as the first clansmen succumbed to the Axe of Desolation. They simply stopped moving before they fell apart, crumbling into pieces of ash that drifted away.

Some reacted quicker than others as they desperately tried to attack the cloud or flee for their lives, the latter finding far greater success than the former. The defenders managed to weaken and delay the wave a bit, but hundreds of people still died in an instant, some of them even E-Grade.

Of course, a single attack wasn't enough to completely eradicate an E-Grade clan.

A massive eye suddenly appeared in the sky, and even Zac felt immense pressure from it even if its gaze was trained on the wave of desolation. The thick black clouds tried to push even further, but it had already exhausted too much energy dealing with the frontlines. It was stopped in its tracks, locked in a stalemate with the fractal eye.

The impasse didn't last long though as a massive hole was blasted through the wave. Three seniors walked through, each of them radiating intense killing intent. Two of them were old men with long flowing beards, while the third was an old lady. None of them held any weapons as far as Zac could tell, but he knew that all three of them were proper cultivators judging by their auras.

It was no doubt the elders who had stepped forward at this crucial time.

They stopped in front of their army, gazing at Zac with a mix of shock and anger.

"You must be the one called Zachary Atwood," the man in the middle said with a murderous glare, his aura exploding toward the sky. "You're powerful, but Clan Cartava has waited for liberation for millennia. We will not be stopped by your tyranny."

A roar of agreement erupted from behind, with the thousands of soldiers glaring daggers at him. The previous fear and hesitation was swept away, replaced with a palpable bloodlust.

Zac's eyes thinned as he looked at the old geezer. His aura was actually weaker compared to the man to his left, yet he seemed to speak for the three. Zac guessed that this was the second elder that Leviala mentioned, the one who essentially staged a coup. That meant the old guy to the left should be the previous Grand Elder, Leviala's grandfather and the most powerful warrior of Clan Cartava.

Three high E-Grade Cultivators and an army assisting them from behind. It was a bit more than he could handle, but he knew that his people would join soon now that the mechanized army was dealt with. He

just needed to hold down these three seniors while his people dealt with the others, at which point victory was theirs.

He was about to make his move, but he suddenly felt slight tremors in the ground ten meters away from him and he immediately guessed something was amiss. He quickly jumped away just as the ground exploded, but Zac hurriedly stopped sending out a fractal blade mid-swing when he saw a familiar head pop out.

"WE ARE HERE! Ah? Why are you here?" Billy roared as he emerged full of vigor, but he quickly lost his momentum when he saw Zac standing right next to him.

"What's going on? What are you doing?" Zac asked with bafflement.

"These big guys told Billy they are good at digging, so Billy wanted to ambush the bad guys," Billy explained as one Anointed after another emerged from the hole, each of them radiating looking fully rested in contrast to those who had manned the walls.

"Ambush?" Zac said with a confused look. "Then you did you scream we're here?"

"A-!" Billy exclaimed as Rhubat sighed and shook his head. "I guess Billy got too excited?"

"It matters not, Wallbreaker. We have appeared right on time," Rhubat rumbled before he turned to Zac. "We're here to assist you, Warmaster."

Zac nodded in thanks before he started when he saw Verana emerge behind the legs of the Anointed as well, accompanied by six other Beastmasters. It looked like this elite squad had planned on going all out when the barrier broke, launching a deadly counter the moment Clan Cartava thought they had seized victory.

But now that Zac had appeared the Anointed had changed their plan, digging their way out prematurely. After all, there was no way that the energy-sensitive Zhix hadn't sensed his appearance.

"We can just help keep one at bay for a bit," Verana said as she looked at the old lady who had not spoken until now. "They are proper Late-Stage warriors, after all."

"That's plenty," Zac said as his aura started to grow.

"Are you truly determined to bar our way on our path to freedom?" the man to the left suddenly asked, his face a mask of grief and exhaustion.

"It might have been possible to work something out before, but that time has passed," Zac said as he turned back toward his enemies.

"So it has," the man sighed.

His aura was completely unleashed the next moment as an elongated ring of white lightning appeared like a halo behind its back. It was almost blindingly radiant, and it reminded Zac of a vertical eye made from pure energy.

"We'll take that one!" Billy roared as he grew, his height soon dwarfing even Rhubat's. "He zapped Billy before. Billy's gonna thwunk him back."

"That old lady still hasn't made her move," Verana said, her face clearly a bit reluctant. "But we'll do our best."

Lulu, Grub, and Slither appeared from within her sleeves, each of them rapidly growing into massive beasts in an instant. They were a lot more powerful compared to the last time Zac saw them, probably thanks to Verana purchasing a part of the Beast Crystal mine before Zac set off to the Tower of Eternity. Verana wasn't planning on staying behind this time as she jumped up on the head of Slither while the other Beastmasters joined in, each of them conjuring mysterious fractals that entered the bodies of the three beasts.

Zac felt he must look like a toddler sandwiched between the hulking Anointed and the awe-inspiring beasts, but his aura told the truth. With two of the elders occupied for the time being Zac only needed to worry about the second elder, and that was perfect in his book. This man was the mastermind behind all the trouble Clan Cartava had caused as far as he could tell, and taking him out would make everything else a lot easier.

The ground was already vibrating as the chains of [Love's Bond] slithered out from the coffin on his back, each of them looking like a tentacle hungry for destruction. It was the Zhix horde, thousands of furious insectoids to settle their grudge with the Cartava army.

"Go," Zac growled, as he pointed his axe toward the second elder.

The ground cracked for hundreds of meters and the sky lit up in color as six massive sets of auras clashed, fighting for supremacy.