

Warlord 201

Chapter 201 Existence straight out of Legends

Just when the lava poured down from all sides of the mountain, everyone's attention was drawn to a specific area near the tip of the mountain.

Huge amount of lava emerged from that area.

At that moment, a pair of several hundred-meter-long wings unfolded behind the tip of the mountain, and the ginormous head of a lizard emerged from behind.

Crawling on top of the mountain was a fiery-red scaled winged lizard.

'What lizard...if that is a lizard, I might as well be a God...' Dilan thought the moment he wondered if the existence far away was a lizard, who had undergone several bloodline enhancements.

This thought dispersed the moment he saw the mighty appearance of the existence that had shaken the city, driving every being away from it.

An existence that seemed to have come to life straight out of Legends, something that shouldn't exist, to begin with...

"...Dragon...that is a Dragon!!"

One of the youngest Survivors screamed out while looking out of the bus' window. The boy's nose was pressed against the window and his eyes were filled with both excitement and fear.

Having witnessed the death of numerous humans, how they had been torn apart by zombies, killed by other mutated animals, or pierced by mythical beasts, the young boy was not naive anymore.

Numerous legends revolved around Dragons, portraying them as extraordinarily intelligent beasts that were bearers of evil, death, and misfortune. They were deemed as greedy and driven by the desire to horde treasures..

However, not one legend seemed to justify the mighty appearance of the red Dragon in front of them.

The legendary existence melted the stones around it, released lava on its own, and radiated a terrifyingly mighty aura, painting the surrounding area in blazing red color.

Its mighty and majestic aura highlighted its huge pair of bat wings, the large fiery scales that covered the strong beast from head to toe.

A large barbed tail coiled around the tip of the mountain of molten lava while its huge head turned in all directions to get a good grasp of the situation around it.

All of a sudden, Dilan's attention was pulled away from the gigantic Dragon as a few old Survivors collapsed.

The Dragon's majestic aura reached them despite being several kilometers further away. It weighed hard on the unlevelled Survivors and was especially hard to cope with for the elderly.

Several nurses rushed to the aid of the collapsed men and women, not without glancing at the majestic Dragon, who had yet to move.

'This is definitely not a beast at Tier-2...Can it be that a Tier-3 or Tier-4 monster reached Milarn? But how would that be possible? The Gates are definitely restricted, otherwise, the Sun God would have sent Tier-3, let alone Tier-2 believers to support the Sun temple's branch on the Shikan plains.'

Dilan had no idea what was going on and his head hurt just at the thought of the trouble that awaited them.

He sighed deeply but didn't do anything. Even in his peak state with every single ability unleashed, he wouldn't be able to defeat this gigantic existence.

Dilan's gaze returned to the Dragon, whose head was fixated on a specific spot to its left. Despite the exhaustion that spread through him, Dilan forced his body to move. He stood up from his seat, leaned forward to look through the window to see where the Dragon was looking, and smiled.

"Thank goodness..." Dilan suddenly mumbled before his head turned back in relief after realizing what was on the Dragon's mind.

'I guess it wants to devour the Divinity Fragment of the Sun God...better that than targeting us...'

Dilan couldn't care less about the Sun God's Divinity Fragment. The miniature sun had no value for him and it could be buried underground, thrown in the ocean, or devoured by the Red Dragon for all he cared.

The only thing of importance was their survival. Thus, he leaned back on the bus seat before he returned his attention to utilizing [Regeneration].

He had to get back to his peak condition as quickly as possible, otherwise, trouble would await them, even if it was not due to the gigantic Red Dragon.

Suddenly a second terrifying roar was issued by the Red Dragon as it flapped the several hundred meters long pair of wings. The trees, stones, and soil that had yet to be covered by the molten lava were flung through the air as a mighty gust of wind blasted through the mountainside.

Lava splattered several kilometers through the air, some droplets nearly hitting the buses in which Dilan and the other Survivors were traveling.

A moment later, the Dragon was in the air before it disappeared from the eyes of many humans and monsters, whose attention had been fixated on it.

However, Dilan didn't look at the same position anymore. His head had already turned to the Sun temple, which was far away from their current location.

One could barely see the small image of the miniature sun that was brightly shining as the ginormous dragon appeared above it.

'As expected...it must have sensed something about the Miniature Sun...was it hibernating before?'

Since the night when all monsters had fled from the mountainside, Dilan had wondered why nothing had happened. It was weird and certainly not usual that they hadn't heard anything since then.

But considering that he had felt weird since he had begun to sacrifice monster corpses to the Divinity Fragment, Dilan's gut feeling told him that something would happen soon.

His gut feeling and his Divine occupation's unique perception were the only reason for their survival, which was why Dilan was thankful to have them.

It may not help him otherwise, but it warned him that something was wrong when he sacrificed the monsters to the Divinity Fragment.

'I awoke the Dragon by nurturing the Miniature Sun, I guess?'

That was the only explanation Dilan could come up with. He had no idea if it was correct or not but it would, somehow, make sense.

After all, a fire-attributed treasure such as the Divinity Fragment, and Miniature Sun, should be quite valuable for the Red Dragon.

Though it did little to explain how a powerful and legendary existence such as a full-fledged western dragon could appear on Milarn as if it was nothing noteworthy.

Dilan turned back his attention, hoping for the best while the others focused on staring at the Dragon as if it was some sort of attraction...a very dangerous one.

He didn't think that the Red Dragon would attack them. They were way too weak to be of any value to the beast just like flies.

After all, its Tier should be a few grades higher than theirs, resulting in a drastically lowered amount of Essence and stats their Essence crystals would provide.

That was if their Essence crystals had any use for the Red Dragon, to begin with.

'I shouldn't bother about that thing. We got away, that's the most important thing for now...'

And as expected, the Red Dragon didn't pursue anything else but the Miniature Sun.

Devouring it with a single bite, the Red Dragon's entire body erupted in terrifying and searing hot flames that were powerful enough to melt its red, fire-resistant scales.

However, that was not something the Red Dragon focused on as it munched on the Divinity Fragment as some sort of rare delicacy, destroying it in its entirety.

The Sun-attributed Divine energy within was devoured, absorbed, and finally annexed by the Red Dragon, whose black eyes turned into the blazing flames of the Sun.

Time passed slowly but nobody dared to stop moving while the Red Dragon was motionlessly standing on the ruins of the once glorious Sun temple that had been completely devastated, and reduced to rubble.

Hours elapsed until an ear-deafening, an exhilarated roar reverberated through the Shikan plains, sending tremors through the ground dozens of kilometers further away.

Meanwhile, Rian...the small city Dilan and the others had lived in...was now reduced to a pile of dust and destruction. The once-bustling city ceased to exist, never to reappear again...

Chapter 202 Distrust?

After Dilan felt as if they had overcome the worst, his mind shut down on its own.

He was feeling way too exhausted and needed some rest. Thus, Dilan entered a deep slumber even if he didn't want to fall asleep just now.

When he finally woke up it was late at night, and their buses had long since stopped. Even the reserves of their gasoline were nearly used up.

This made things quite difficult because nobody was sure where they should stay now.

As they had been driving over the highway, their group had passed by a few small cities and villages. However, they didn't dare to halt there because the cities and villages were completely devastated.

There weren't any signs of human survivors left amongst the ruins and it almost looked like monsters had taken over control of everything.

They were everywhere, creating their own territories and hunting grounds.

While Dilan had been asleep, the buses had been attacked more than five times. However, instead of attacking in large groups, four times there had a single predator that had attacked their group.

It had appeared all of a sudden and simply killed a few Ascenders before it disappeared once again..

There was no pattern in its attack which was why it was hard to find clues in foreshadowing its next attack.

The existence of a monster that couldn't be killed by anyone instilled fear within the unlevelled Survivors. They had to rely on the powerful Ascenders to survive.

But seeing that even the superhuman and mighty Ascenders were not able to defeat some monsters, let alone ensure that they could protect themselves, was not really helpful.

On the contrary, it ruined everyone's mood and prevented the Survivors from being at ease.

Nobody complained about it openly because everyone could perceive that the Ascenders were even more tense than anyone else but it was quite obvious that the trust of the ordinary survivors in the Ascenders of Dilan's group was slowly decreasing.

Yet, oddly enough, the exact opposite was the case with their trust in Dilan.

Dilan had warned all of them about the threat lurking in the mountainside long before something had happened, to begin with.

Because of his warning, everyone, who had trusted him, had received more than enough time to pack up and make necessary preparations to move at once.

Dilan might have taken a lot of time to return from the Sun temple and he had looked as if he was closer to death than to stay alive, but he had managed to come back to them.

He never thought of abandoning them, even if that was something he could have done a long time ago.

Most Survivors were not even sure if they would be able to lead a group like Dilan was doing, and continually sacrificing his well-being for the sake of others.

Dilan might be scary but his actions were still a clear indicator of how much of a good person he truly was.

Furthermore, his strength seemed to be unparalleled. Considering that his condition was so bad, they could guess that he had fought his life on the line when he was at the Sun temple.

This may not be impressive for most Survivors, but each Ascender and many members of the Porter Unit clearly knew how powerful each of the Sun temple's believers was, especially the Priestess and her Eternal Guards.

They were certain that Dilan had killed all of them. His power was incomparable to the others and even Yvonne was pretty sure that she was much weaker than him.

Because of that, while the Survivor's trust in the Ascenders decreased owing to their incapability to protect them properly in times when they needed them, their trust in Dilan reached new heights, which resulted in his dumbfounding when people began to treat him differently, almost with a bit of reverence.

Dilan hadn't been moved outside the bus he had been sleeping in. As such, when he woke up, there were only other Survivors, who were too weak to sleep outside, in the cold weather of late January.

No one wanted to sleep outside in the cold but the buses didn't have enough space for everyone. Fortunately, they had a few Ascenders with fire-attributed abilities and certain treasures that generated heat as long as enough mana was supplied to them.

These heat packs were not necessarily great or had a wider reach but they were more than enough to prevent anyone from freezing to death while sleeping outside.

"What a mess..." Dilan mumbled when he found the strength to get up from his seat, put on the remaining treasures that were lying next to him, and leave the bus.

Everyone treated him nicely and some Survivors were even staring at him as if he was some sort of saint or holy figure.

He ignored them but their expressions and attitude didn't match the way they usually acted.

'Well, whatever.'

Dilan's [Nightvision] made things much easier for him while he was searching for Sven and the others.

Some of them should still be awake, and take turns guarding their group.

The buses had been set up in a circle, with the resting Survivors in the centre to prevent the cold wind from blasting into their face, and to protect them from monsters.

It was certainly not a great means of protection but one of the only solutions they could come up with for now.

“Dilan, you’re already awake? Are you fine? Don’t you want to rest some more?” Xenia found Dilan as he was walking past one of the few campfires they had set up.

He halted in his tracks and turned to the woman in her 30s with an impassive expression.

“How many died? Tell me what happened.” Dilan asked without any emotions in his voice, causing Xenia to flinch the moment she heard him.

It was almost as if he was a robot but Xenia didn’t comment on it. Instead, she quickly summarized what happened when he had been asleep.

“So we’re nearly out of gasoline, the Survivor’s mood is bad, 13 Tier-1 Ascenders have been killed, and everyone is afraid?” He asked to make sure that he understood everything correctly.

“And, we don’t know if the unleveled Survivors or the low-leveled Ascenders will be able to survive if we keep sleeping outside in the cold.” Xenia blurted out in frustration.

She and everyone else knew that they had to leave Rian. If not for Dilan’s warning all of them would have been dead by now. The Red Dragon was not something they could play around with, after all.

But even if they now knew that it had been necessary to leave Rian, the short period of peace some Survivors had received in the last few days had been truly wonderful.

It had felt as if the world had calmed down and that peace would return.

Because of that feeling, it was further disappointing to realize that their situation had grown worse once again.

Even Xenia was unable to hide her frustration and sadness about this unavoidable truth.

They were not at the peak of the food chain anymore. Instead, they were now struggling to survive.

Everyone understood this, now even better than before!

‘Looks like, I cannot waste my time in this ridiculously weakened state...’ Dilan thought as he moved his pained body toward a small and empty area within the circle of buses.

Taking a few deep breaths, he looked at his storage ring before turning his head toward Xenia once again.

She had followed him without receiving an order from Dilan or saying a word. And after seeing his fiery eyes and the expression on his face, Xenia knew that she had done the correct thing.

“If Williams, Yvonne, Kathrine, and the others are awake, tell them to come to me. We have something to talk about...”

Chapter 203 Plans are meant to be destroyed

Dilan was not in a hurry to distribute the treasures and ability crystals he had exchanged with the Sacred points his group had accumulated before.

It was way past midnight and some good sleep was a lot more important for everyone.

He was also sleepy but his mind didn't allow him to fall asleep once again. The attack of the monster that had appeared out of nowhere, just to disappear after successfully killing its targets worried him quite a bit.

From what Dilan had heard its strength was not high enough to kill Yvonne or any of the Ascenders, who had been out hunting with Dilan for eight days.

Its strength was not the problem but its ability to approach Tier-1 Ascenders without being noticed definitely was.

He was bothered about this but he had gotten his hand on more than enough Ability crystals and equipment to solve most flaws of the Ascenders, who could be said to have less experience or lower stats than their comrades.

But before doing anything stupid, Dilan had to tend to his weakened state.

'What could be better than recovering from my weakened state by absorbing Essence?!'

Knowing the effectiveness of Essence, he started to take out the corpses of the Ligrav and Rasnian, which he had killed and stored in his storage ring.

He had to release their corpses to cut open their heads, just to get his hands on their Essence crystals. It was quite laborious and took Dilan several hours before he had absorbed the Essence crystals of every single Ligrav and Rasnian.

When he was done, he quickly stored their corpses once again stored in his storage ring so as to not frighten the Survivors to death the moment they would wake up.

Some night watchers had seen what Dilan had been doing but they didn't say anything. The night watchers didn't feel like gossiping either.

All of them were tired and their morale had hit rock bottom as well. That was why the only somewhat good sign was that Dilan had woken up and that he kept absorbing Essence crystals for several hours..

The sun would soon get up, it had stopped snowing and it almost felt like the tension of the entire temporary camp had disappeared into thin air.

Dilan was completely oblivious to the influence his mere presence had on the others. He was focused on something completely different as a single message appeared in front of him.

[998 <Bronze>, 148 <Silver>, and 5 <Golden> Essence crystals have been absorbed → +4.1 Strength, +2.9 Health, +3.6 Stamina, +4.5 Agility, +13.9 Mana]

After he read that message, two additional notifications appeared in front of him.

[Essence pool has been filled. Host has reached Level 7(Tier-1)! +1.0 Status points can be allocated!]

[Essence pool has been filled. Host has reached Level 8(Tier-1)! +1.0 Status points can be allocated!]

'Two Level ups? Well, that was to be expected.'

Dilan was not fazed at the sight of the level-ups he had received. Instead, the Essence he absorbed was the most important. It was even more pressing than the stats he had received.

His condition had improved a lot thanks to the massive amount of Essence he had absorbed. It nourished his body, energized his cells, and accelerated his healing process.

After Dilan had absorbed the 1000th Essence crystal, Dilan noticed that activating his Origin ability while absorbing Essence was quite useful. The healing effect of both overlapped, providing his body with everything it needed to recuperate at a rapid pace.

He was still in a weakened state, which lowered his stats drastically but Dilan was finally able to move a bit more freely than before.

It didn't hurt that much anymore and he was not feeling as if every single movement of his would further worsen his state.

"That feels much better!" He mumbled, but there was one thing that ticked him off a little bit.

'But why did I receive so many stat points, especially Mana? Well, the Ligrav and Rasnian race seemed to have been focused on their elemental affinities while fighting. So that might be a reason...but shouldn't the Ligrav and Rasnian be considered...wait...no...hmmm.

There were no signs that any of them had mutated, or evolved in a unique way... Are the Ligrav and Rasnian race similar to the human race, with each of them being considered as a separate entity by the system behind the Primordial Ascension?'

Dilan was confused but he was actually not able to tell the truth. After all, the status points he had received were not high enough to think that each of the 1151 Essence crystals provided him with status points.

And then again, there were other things that confused him as much as the high amount of status points he had received!

'I received five Golden Essence Crystals. Four from the Eternal Guards and one from the Priestess. Does that mean they have already undergone their 3rd blood enhancement? If not, what exactly does it mean? I still don't understand how the quality of Essence crystals is determined.'

It was not actually that important to find out the truth about either of the points Dilan was bothered about.

However, he felt that it might be crucial to know the answer in the future.

But due to the simple fact that Dilan lived in the present and not in the future, the present issues had to be solved with the highest priority.

After his condition improved considerably, Dilan kept using [Regeneration]. He tried to replenish his mana as quickly as possible but they didn't have many Mana replenishment potions left and the surrounding mana was not that dense either.

That was why he averted his focus to the storage ring once again.

This time, Dilan didn't release numerous corpses from the storage ring but he took out several ability crystals and treasures with a high variety of quality and Tier.

[Blazing Meteor] Tier-0 ★

[Light of Helia] Tier-0 ★★☆☆

[Strength Amplification(Passive)] Ungraded ★★

[Agility Amplification (Passive)] Ungraded ★★

[Golden Sanctuary] Tier-1 ★

[Grave of the Undead] Tier-0 ★★

[Puppeteer] Ungraded ★★☆☆

[Fallen Sprite's Boots] <Silver Tierless>

[Rock Shield] <Bronze Tier-1>

[Minotaur Daggers] <Bronze Tier-1>

[Blood Slayer] <Bronze Tier-1>

[Seraph's Holy Robe] <Silver Tier-1>

[Thunder Snake] <Trash Tier-1> Magic Scroll

[Burning Soul] <Bronze Tier-1> Magic Scroll

[Mavis' Guard] <Trash Tier-1> Magic Scroll

[Mavis' Guard(+)] <Bronze Tier-1> Magic scroll

Numerous items were laid out in front of Dilan. They were only the tip of the iceberg but it was already more than enough for many to feel envious of his treasures.

Dilan didn't want to take any of the ability crystals or equipment for himself. That hadn't been his plan and he wouldn't act selfishly all of a sudden either.

The others had to become stronger. Whether this strength came from their stats, which was their foundation, abilities, or the support of external items such as Magic Scrolls or equipment was secondary.

That was why Dilan was currently wondering who to give which ability crystal, piece of equipment, Magic Scroll for emergencies, and so on.

It was certainly not easy to determine who would be able to make the most use of certain abilities, items, and Magic Scrolls.

But that was not the biggest problem. Rather, his issue lay in the trust he could award the others!

There were multiple problems Dilan had to speak about with the others.

If he gave someone a rare ability crystal and they chose to leave the group they would make big losses.

Simultaneously, Dilan didn't want to bind anyone to his group, which was why he found himself in a complicated situation.

Either he trusted others and believed that they would continue to stay loyal to him, even if they were to reunite with their family, or even if the military or someone of the government were to have created a secure base to live peacefully, or something similar to that.

Everything was possible and Dilan knew that it was impossible to be prepared for all scenarios.

However, that was exactly what Dilan wished to be...prepared for everything.

Unfortunately, life was never supposed to run according to plans. Some might work, but certainly not all of them.

This was even less the case after the Primordial Ascension had occurred.

Plans needed backup plans, and the loss of thoroughly nurtured Ascenders, whether it was due to their death or them leaving the group, had to be taken into account, whether Dilan wanted to accept this or not.

He understood this, and also the importance of strengthening his people right now. After all, they had to survive the following days until they found the next place they could call their base, and possibly their home!

Chapter 204 Speech

Distributing the Ability crystals, equipment, and Magic Scrolls was not further difficult after everyone gathered around him.

Kathrine and the others had woken up before the sun rose, and it was still early in the morning when they finished the entire distribution process.

"Do you think it's fine for us to focus on our own growth by taking the best abilities for ourselves?" Oliver suddenly asked.

Since the day before, his attitude toward Dilan had changed quite a bit. Oliver now knew that he should have trusted Dilan's warning and that he should have backed their leader instead of questioning his decision to leave.

He was still hurt because Dilan had treated him coldly the day before but that was something Oliver had to live with.

"Most monsters were killed by us, so we deserve our fair share of equipment and ability crystals, to begin with.

We and the other Tier-1 Ascenders, who went out with us to hunt thousands of monsters should be rewarded.

This is not only to increase our strength but also to show everyone that hard-working people will be rewarded accordingly.

As for the remaining ability crystals, pieces of equipment, tools, and Magic Scrolls, we should hand them out to the most diligent Survivors and Ascenders. That would be the fairest and it would motivate everyone to work even harder.”

Sven revealed his opinion before he gave a tired smile to the others..

Those who were always around Dilan and quite close to him knew that he was quite worried about the possibility of death of his people.

He didn't want anything to happen to them, which was also why he was quite bothered about his weakened state. Increasing the strength of the strongest Ascenders in their group would change this as well.

In this regard, it was not even important if they would always stay loyal to Dilan or not. In the end, what mattered was that all of them survived.

Dilan realized this as well, which was why he had chosen to ignore the stupid thought of questioning his people's loyalty.

He would have to gain their unwavering trust and loyalty and couldn't expect them to stay by his side just like that.

This was something Dilan knew from the beginning and it made things extremely difficult.

'How did I even end up here?' That was one of the many questions flashing through Dilan's mind every now and then.

There was no proper answer to this but the fact that he didn't want to let anyone die just like that was a bit closer to reality.

It would be a shame to abandon his race just because his life had been miserable.

Not everyone was like his parental figures if one could even call them that, to begin with.

His life might have been filled with physical pain, death, and mental torture but there had also been love, and the obligation to protect what was important to him.

The love of his step sisters had given him enough strength to keep protecting them, until the day all of them were freed from the gates of hell; from their family's grasp.

Times might have changed, now that Milarn had become a whole different world that was overflowing with ferocious monsters that were strong enough to cause the destruction of an entire city with just a roar.

But even this world was filled with pain and death. Humans were cruel and everyone could now witness this with glaring clarity after the Primordial Ascension than ever before.

Righteousness, kindness, and selflessness were rare to find, and if someone exhibited such traits, the disgusting reality would kill them.

After all, all these attributes were not rewarded in a world where strength determined everything.

The strong and kind-hearted might even get backstabbed the moment they lowered their guard in front of the people they rescued, the people they trusted, and those they wanted to help in becoming stronger.

Dilan knew that he shouldn't be too kind to others but that didn't mean he should take away their hope, their beliefs, and everything else that made them feel even the slightest bit positive.

He could act nice when there didn't seem to be any hope left, but he was also able to turn into a devil the moment someone dared to try playing around with him or his group.

Thus, he was both feared and respected.

But the most important was that he had gained the trust of the Survivors with everything he had done until now.

That was also why everyone listened to his orders without saying a single word the moment he made a short speech in front of everyone.

Dilan had observed his surroundings well, including the expressions, behavior, and condition of every single person in his group.

That was why he found it necessary to deliver his speech. He just hoped that everything he was about to say would be enough to lead his people in the direction he intended to lead them.

If they misunderstood his intentions, everything would be for naught. Despite his strength and everything he had done so far, it was not impossible for Dilan to lose his people's trust.

However, Dilan knew that he had to do something, right now, otherwise, things would get worse!

Taking a deep breath, he stood on the roof of a bus before he began with his, hopefully, successful speech.

"I know that your lives have been turned upside down once again. The appearance of the Red Dragon and the destruction of Rian must have been imprinted into everyone's minds by now.

Maybe some doubt if it's even worth running away to find a new hideout to stay, a new place to live, and a place to start everything from scratch.

'Will we have to run away again if another Dragon or a different being with equal powers will appear all of a sudden?'

'Is it necessary for us to keep fleeing, to become nomads, and live every day in fear of dying?'

'Would it have been better to die instead of struggling to stay alive in a place that feels like hell?'

A few of you have had thoughts similar to these, am I right?

I can tell that everyone wants answers, and I would love to reassure all of you, that everything will be alright, that everyone will survive and that life will get worthwhile as long as we keep striving for more.

However, I cannot give you such an answer.

I am only a single individual, and I won't be able to change everything on my own. In fact, I cannot even protect all of you as much as I wish to.

Even if I were to fight with all my might, it would be impossible to defeat the Red Dragon.

Maybe, I will gain enough strength to defeat a Dragon in the future but until then...I will never know what will happen.

Life is unpredictable and I can only do my best to protect all of you. However, in return, I need everyone to give their utmost effort as well.

I can tell that many of you are desperate and afraid about the future. We don't even have a home right now.

However, as long as we're alive and able to walk, fight, and work, it's possible for us to achieve everything.

What does it matter if we'll have to abandon our next home once again? We will relocate and build a new place.

We will become stronger, pay attention not to repeat the mistakes we did before, and grow.

As long as we stay alive and fight for our future, nothing will be able to stop us!"

Chapter 205 This little shit

Dilan had a lot more to say, including that he hoped everyone would show their will to stay alive by working hard.

In testing times like these, everyone should support one another in every possible way if that was necessary to survive.

However, upon seeing the expression on the Survivor's face and the admiration in the eyes of the Ascenders, Dilan ended his speech without adding anything else.

He jumped off the bus and returned to the others, while Sven replaced him on top of the bus' roof to give further instructions.

"Everyone, pack up. We're leaving. Let's find a new place to call home!!"

Raising his right arm in the air, Sven looked extremely proud of what he saw.

He saw Dilan from the corner of his eyes and felt like roaring out so that everyone would follow him.

But the little push he wanted to give the Survivors was not even necessary as the first few Ascenders began to roar out, ready to fight with their life on the line if that was necessary for the sake of their group; for Dilan's sake.

Earlier, Dilan had never really noticed the influence he had on others.

However, right now, as the thunderous roars of more than two thousand Ascenders and Survivors reached him, even the young man couldn't help but feel baffled..

'Did Sven do something, or was that through my speech? Or...maybe was it the title [Beyond the Stars]? Everyone in my range gains courage through it, so that might be it?'

While Dilan was baffled, the roars died down and everyone began to pack up. Storing everything away didn't take long and the buses' engines were started only half an hour later.

Their group consisting of more than 2500 humans was able to pack up and leave in just half an hour. This was beyond anyone's comprehension.

Yet, it caused a bright smile to emerge on the face of Dilan and everyone else as the buses set off on the highway, in the search of their new home.

"Shiron is the next closest city. That's what you said, right?" Dilan asked once again, glancing over to Williams, Xenia and Sven, who were running next to each other.

Dilan didn't want to rest anymore. He was outside the bus he had been resting in earlier, and running next to the others, while paying attention to the surroundings for any surprise attacks.

The monster that had followed them for the entire last day didn't attack at night, so many Ascenders believed that it had left.

However, Dilan didn't believe so. He knew that some monsters had gained far more intelligence than most Ascenders believed 'dumb animals' to possess.

That was why he stayed on high alert.

"Shiron is the next closest city. But it's only a city that had 50,000 citizens before. We shouldn't stay there. Let's just get some gasoline for the buses and increase the distance from the Red Dragon as long as we still can!"

Xenia was most worried about the Red Dragon's existence. Furthermore, she believed that it was not helpful for them to build their new home in a city that was bound to get destroyed by the Red Dragon sooner or later.

Every single small city they had passed until now looked no different to Rian.

There may have been some districts and streets that were less damaged, and a handful of unscathed buildings but the overall condition of most cities was bad.

Every place showed the telltale signs of death and destruction that tens of thousand monsters had brought forth.

But Dilan merely smiled at Xenia's comment.

"You know, there might be other powerful monsters somewhere else. If we keep running away from the Red Dragon, without knowing if it is even interested in us, we might end up in the maw of an even more terrifying monster.

And, to be honest, I actually doubt that the Red Dragon can be bothered about our existence. It shouldn't care much about us, not as long as we're still as powerless and of now value to it as right now."

Just when Dilan took a short break from speaking, Williams came to back up Dilan and added,

“He is correct. The Red Dragon didn’t seem to care much about us. It would have caught us already if it was truly interesting or felt threatened by our existence.

As for your concern about living in a destroyed city, and a small one at that...we can either clear one of the unscathed or less damaged buildings or build our own comfortable space if we’re willing to stay somewhere.”

Even if Williams didn’t know the reason for Dilan showing interest in Shiron, he felt that there must be something that attracted Dilan’s attention.

And just the fact that Dilan was considering the option was more than enough reason for Williams to believe that it might be worth a shot if they wanted to build their hideout in Shiron.

“Well...I never said that I wanted to build our base in Shiron. I just noticed that there are many villages and cities in Shiron’s surroundings. Furthermore, there are quite a few Gates on the Shikan plains all around this area.

So...I felt like it would be great to conquer the Gates and possibly find out which Gate has the best treasures so we can improve our equipment, gain more treasures, and of course ability cr-...”

Just when Dilan was about to finish speaking, his body jolted. His expression turned serious and without a trace of hesitation, he activated [Thunder Step].

In the blink of an eye, Dilan blasted ahead. He passed by the tree, turned toward the right and disappeared from his earlier location.

[Gale]!

[Gale]!

After he used Gale twice, Dilan twisted his body once again before using the third and last use of [Gale], disappearing from the location he had just appeared in.

The moment he re-emerged ten meters ahead of his prior position, he unleashed the Blazing Serpentine Blade.

Slashing out with the Serpentine Blade, Dilan didn’t bother to engulf it with blazing flames.

Instead, the enlarged blade lashed at one of the youngest Tier-1 Ascenders in their group.

The young man’s eyes were filled with horror as he encountered Dilan’s ice-cold eyes that had appeared out of nowhere.

And just a moment later, the tip of the Blazing Serpentine Blade pierced through his skin, flesh, and bones.

Blood splattered through the surrounding, making the young and old Survivors in the bus next to them scream in fright as blood spilled on their windows.

They thought that Dilan had just killed one of his own people on a whim and without any reason.

However, the moment the first few of them had calmed down, their eyes widened in shock.

“What...is that?!”

The young Ascender’s eyes were wide as saucers as he looked at Dilan in terror.

However, there was also a trace of gratitude, fear, and confusion in the young man’s eyes as he looked down at his chest.

The Serpentine Blade had nearly cut into his chest, missing it by merely a few centimeters.

But even then, Dilan didn’t miss his target, at all. His strike had eliminated the perpetrator, who had killed his Ascenders the day before by taking them by surprise.

And it was exactly as he had presumed beforehand.

“So it was this little piece of shit that did everything?”

Chapter 206 Shiron

A small Desert Fox, the size of a large cat was lying dead in the young Ascender’s arms.

“A sly mutated animal with a spatial affinity was the perpetrator.” Dilan could merely say before he sighed deeply.

He didn’t waste too much of his time with the Desert Fox. Dilan stored its corpse inside his storage ring before he turned away once again.

When he left the crime scene, Dilan left behind a dumbfounded young Ascender and numerous survivors, whose gaze was glued to his back, following every step he took.

“He is amazing...so sexy.” One of the Survivors couldn’t help but blurt out. She realized only a moment later that she had spoken out loud and blushed.

However, no one reprimanded her because she was right. Dilan was amazing. One could clearly see that he was not in his best condition and was still exhausted.

Yet, like a ninja warrior, he had appeared in front of the young Ascender, who was about to be attacked and killed, to save him before leaving as if he did nothing special.

Almost none of the Survivors inside the bus had seen Dilan move. But for those few, who had been able to perceive some of his motions, they were truly baffled because he was faster than even the fastest Ascender they had seen until now.

“Yeah, he is.” A young child yelled out in excitement, feeling reassured with Dilan by his side.

The mother of the young kid caressed his hair before nodding her head as well..

Dilan was truly amazing...and sexy.

But the amazing and sexy Dilan, who they kept praising for a long time even after he left them, didn’t even know what was going on.

He had returned to the others with a calm expression, while they could only look at him in confusion.

“What did you do? We heard some screams and were just about to come over to take a look...”

Still tired from the incidents of the last 48 hours, and lack of sleep, Williams had required a little bit longer to react.

That was why they had not followed suit and reached the origin of the commotion that happened less than half a minute ago.

Dilan took longer to return to them than to kill the Spatial Desert Fox, but he simply waved off his hand that was smeared with some blood.

“I took care of the problem you guys had with the perpetrator from yesterday. By the way, what were we talking about before I left? About building a base in Shiron, and my opinion about that, right?”

The others merely nodded their heads, without saying anything else.

Xenia was slightly baffled that Dilan had resolved the issue they hadn't been able to solve the day before, while Yvonne and Oliver, who had approached them just a moment ago, looked at Dilan with interest.

“Are we going to stay in Shiron? Seems like a good idea. There are many Gates in the surrounding area, and if other people hear about a safety zone in Shiron, they might even try to migrate from other cities to follow us.” Yvonne said with lots of enthusiasm.

She liked the idea of staying in Shiron. It felt correct to her. Meanwhile, Oliver was not sure what to think about the idea of building a base in Shiron.

There were numerous reasons for staying but also for leaving, so he couldn't actually decide what would be best for them. That was why he looked at Dilan, expecting him to state his opinion as they made their way towards Shiron to get some gasoline.

“We can take a look at the situation in Shiron while refilling gasoline. As long as there are not too many powerful monsters, but a place we can turn into a smithy, and a place that is easy to protect, even at the risk of facing powerful monster attacks, we should reconsider staying in Shiron.”

Dilan didn't want to make a mistake now. Everyone was tensed up and it was quite obvious that the Survivors wouldn't be able to stay calm inside the buses for a long time.

They needed to start building a new base, not only to calm the others but also not to fall behind too much.

It was necessary for all of them to keep progressing, to never stop, and to build some sort of society where they could live decently.

However, in order to do so, they needed a suitable place to start building up their base that would act as the center of their small territory.

That was why Dilan had to find the best possible location to set up a base as soon as possible.

It didn't take their group long before they left the highway to approach Shiron.

Many monsters entered everyone's view but none of them released the same pressure as the Inferior Two-headed Hydrani.

Yvonne was confident to be able to defeat the monsters in their sight without any difficulties.

The other powerful Ascenders were also certain about their capabilities to be stronger than the monsters in their surroundings.

Not a single group of monsters attacked them on their way to the small city, but the slightly odd fact was that many monsters paid lots of attention to them.

The Ascenders were ready to fight but the monsters acted as if they didn't sense the battle lust of their opponents.

After observing the group of Ascenders and the rest of the group for some time, the monsters left once again.

"There are definitely a few monsters with higher intelligence. If they can send out scouts to gather information, they shouldn't be dumb or too weak."

Dilan didn't think highly of monsters. Most of them were extremely weak and didn't have a high combat power. Their perception of battles was, in most cases, blurred by their wild instincts.

Thus, they would usually die rather stupidly at his hands.

However, it would be foolish to disregard their intelligence as well. The Spatial Desert Fox was a good example to show that underestimating some mutated animals would result in the death of his people.

The others hadn't been able to defeat the Spatial Desert Fox, resulting in the death of many good men and women.

"Tell the others to make notes about the monsters who observe us and for how long they observe us. If they notice anything else, report that to me as well."

This command had confused some Ascenders at first. But the threat posed by the Spatial Desert Fox was still fresh in their mind, so they complied without a doubt.

Everyone was tense as they entered the city. The Survivors were unable to keep their calm as they expected the buses to get attacked by ferocious monsters at any moment.

On the other hand, most Ascenders were not afraid of the surrounding monsters. They had Dilan and the others by their side. Rather than fearing monsters, it was humans and other evil Ascenders who were far more dangerous, and problematic to deal with.

However, that was something many were bound to find out sooner or later.

If they wanted to or not didn't matter. As long as they wanted to survive, fighting against other Ascenders...human Ascenders was not something they could avoid forever!

Chapter 207 Great environment for Growth

When they were fairly inside the small city, they realized quite quickly that there were not many monsters around.

Most buildings were destroyed and looked like houses that had been abandoned for several decades before they turned into ruins.

Every now and then, one could see small groups of zombies running around. They smelled and sensed the living and were immediately drawn toward them.

With a large group of more than 2500 humans, they were like a led sign inviting the zombies, who were thirsting for their warm blood, and wanting to devour their wildly beating heart that was filled with fear and to gobble their brains.

Not many of those zombie groups had powerful individuals amongst them.

In fact, the current groups of zombies were much weaker than the monsters they usually fought.

The only problem was that a single bite or scratch was enough to turn a human full of vigor into an undead zombie.

The zombification process took longer the lighter the sustained injury was, but it didn't change much of the fact that one would inevitably turn into a zombie.

That was also the reason why nobody dared to fight recklessly against the beings that had once been human beings, just like them..

Well, that was if one excluded Dilan.

With his Immunity passive ability he could fight as recklessly as he wanted because it didn't matter if he was scratched or bitten.

He had fought against each group of zombies, whether there were ten powerful Tier-1 zombies or only ordinary low-leveled zombies in the hordes that attacked his group.

His people were still tired and Dilan didn't want a single of them to die by accidentally being scratched.

This would be the worst that could happen and it was something Dilan avoided by all means and jumped in every fight.

Some young Ascenders didn't understand Dilan's intention and they began to believe that he wanted to show off his strength in front of everyone.

However, that couldn't be further from the truth, which was something the older Ascenders and those, who had been with Dilan for quite some time already, knew very well.

They were amused at the behavior of the younger Ascenders and those who joined their group not too long ago, but nobody said anything.

Time slowly passed and their group made their way toward the center of the city.

Not a single Peak Tier-1 monster or a Tier-2 monster entered their view which was why it was quite easy for their group to decide to comb through the entire city with smaller and larger groups.

Most Ascenders stayed behind to protect the Survivors, who prepared food for everyone, using huge pots, several small camping gas stoves, and the ingredients which they had brought from Rian.

They didn't have many vegetables, fruits, or healthy food to eat. However, on the other hand, there was more than enough meat for them to have, the meat of monsters was far more delicious than one could imagine.

Nobody cared that they were unable to have a balanced diet, other than Bianne, who was extremely frustrated about their situation.

It was already hard to cook for more than 2500 humans in the open as if they were on a large-scale camping trip.

But not having anything but a few ingredients, with a majority being huge monster corpses that had been dissected so that the delicious parts could be barbecued or turned into a broth was the most annoying for her.

Dilan couldn't care less about Bianne's trouble. For the moment, it was important that they had food to put in their bellies, not that their meals were balanced.

That was why he averted his attention to some other topics as he listened to the complaints of the people around him.

"We have enough Lumina crystals to concoct thousands of mana replenishment potions. That is great and all, but Kathrine wants to use the Lumina crystals as a light source when we build our base.

She is of the opinion that we need the Lumina crystals to show others that humans live there and that we will notice monsters if they choose to attack us.

I mean...I understand that we need to see the monsters, who attack us but I don't like the idea of attracting them intentionally. Instead, we should focus on concocting potions rather than using the remaining Lumina crystals to turn them into streetlamps..."

They couldn't get their hands on more Lumina crystals anymore because they left Rian and the permanent Gate that lead to the Krendel's Underground Valley.

Dilan understood Sarah's concern, even if he was a little bit baffled that she was more bothered about being unable to concoct more potions than anything else.

'And I was already worried that she didn't actually want to focus on concocting potions but that she sacrificed her needs to do so...to think that she is almost obsessed with the thought of becoming an Alchemist now.'

Dilan smiled before turning his head to someone else, who started to complain as well. However, that was what Dilan expected and his smile didn't falter.

"How am I supposed to forge now?! I get that you got me a new forging hammer and anvil from the Sacred Shop to help me forge but I need ores and other materials to forge, you know?!"

It was Old Jeff, who complained and Dilan merely nodded his head, agreeing to the old man's words.

“Of course, you need ores. Just use the ones stored in your Penta Item Pouch for the time being.

If everything we’re looking for is located in Shiron, we can settle here.

And when we do that, we will try our best to find a Gate that brings us to some place where we can mine ores, alright?”

There were many things he had to pay attention to and there was even more stuff they needed.

In the end, they could only procure most things through the help of the Gates because Milarn didn’t have many useful resources for them.

There was no Jadetite, no Stonemonkey Devial fruits, no Silver Iron ore on Milarn.

However, Dilan was quite confident that they would get their hands on new, and stronger fruits, and other plants, especially forging goods, whether it was materials or blueprints.

Yvonne had already said that she liked it in Shiron and that she believed that they could become stronger if they stayed here.

If he were to be honest, Dilan had to acknowledge that he believed the same.

Everything hinted to him that Shiron was a good place to stay, and when the groups of Ascenders, who had scouted the city returned, Dilan knew what they were going to do!

‘Looks like we’re not too unlucky!’

There was no need to hesitate anymore when he heard the reports. There were signs of humans having survived in Shiron, which was great.

However, it was not the reason for Dilan to feel light-hearted and at ease.

The reason for him to feel like this was something else, a great place to do everything they wished to achieve!

“To become stronger as quickly as possible, this place should be quite suitable. Everything we need is here, including a great view of the Shikan plains, Gates outside the city and the most important fact is that we have enough space for everyone to live comfortably!

Are you guys ready for a new chapter in your life?” Dilan asked with a sly smile on his face before they set off to approach an area in the industrial district of Shiron, right next to a large half-destroyed alloy manufacturing factory.

Chapter 208 New Start

Starting from scratch was difficult.

However, doing the same with more than 2500 other people in a world flooded by monsters, mutated animals and mythical beasts was even more difficult.

Dilan and his people had claimed a huge factory for the purpose of starting a new life.

The outer premises of the factory had enough space for more than a hundred buses to stay but that was obvious because the factory they had claimed was both one of the biggest warehouses and toy manufacturing factories in the whole country.

Nearly all factories and warehouses in Shiron had belonged to big firms and companies that were well known.

That was also why many people had wanted to be employed by them. This resulted in the appearance of numerous cities around Shiron.

The city itself didn't grow fast simply because the mayor wanted the city to be known as the city of technology, an industrial superpower, and so on. There weren't many buildings other than factories and companies inside Shiron.

However, the villages and cities around were a different matter as they developed fast.

For Dilan and the others, the only important criteria were that they should have lots of space for all of them to stay. It was not necessary to separate his people and make them stay in multiple factories yet, and by reconstructing the warehouse and the toy factory, there would be more than enough space for everyone.

The space outside was also vast, while the fences around it blocked off the low-leveled zombies...

Others would be able to pass through but Kathrine, Sven, and their people from the Porter Unit would soon install a security system all over their new home to warn them of potential trespassers.

The factory didn't have a huge kitchen, let alone a big cafeteria. However, that was fine because they could simply build a huge kitchen for themselves, by taking everything from the surrounding restaurants that had been abandoned.

Simultaneously, sleeping spaces were created as mattresses were laid out properly after the ground had been cleaned a little bit.

It was already late evening when everyone was done with the bare minimum of cleaning a large area and prepared to go to sleep.

Bianne prepared dinner for everyone and all of them ate silently without a word.

However, one could clearly feel that most Survivors were much more at ease than before.

If they had been worried to death just half a day earlier, their current mood was anything but gloomy.

"I like it here. We might not have as much privacy as we had in the hospital but I believe that is something we can change as well. We should have a few construction workers here. As long as we procure everything, we might get permission from Dilan and the others to build large places for everyone.

At least we should have a separate space for men and women, an infirmary, and so on..."

"Maybe we can even start farming on the roof. It should be safe enough and the flat roof has a lot of space."

“No, the roof should be used for the Ascenders to practice combat, so that the new ones can sweat in the bright sun while staying safe!”

“I think Dilan will claim the alloy manufacturing factory next to us as well. Old Jeff needs a forge and the alloy manufacturing factory would be best for him to get everything he needs. Maybe the big space of the alloy factory will be used for farming, or to create a proper training place for the newer Ascenders.”

Hundreds of Survivors were excitedly gossiping about their new life, and discussing what they would do now in the new chapter of their life that was about to begin and all the new changes they would face soon.

There were also more than enough Survivors who were scared, dissatisfied with the change, and mourning for the life they had left behind since the Primordial Ascension had occurred.

However, the negativity of some Survivors didn't affect Dilan or the others in any way. All of them were quite satisfied with themselves and unaffected by the negative thoughts of their comrades.

They were still alive and that was all that mattered.

“My weakened state shouldn't last longer than a few more days. Tomorrow, I will see if there are some permanent Gates on Shiron.

The Scout Unit should get their hands on a map of Shiron, the surrounding cities, and the landscape so that they can start marking the dangerous areas, where Gates are located, and possible training areas for weak Ascenders.

I don't want to get any reports about deaths, so don't die, guys, alright?”

Dilan's mood was far from okay because his mind was constantly being dragged back to Mason, his death, and the guilt he was still feeling.

However, his mood didn't change the fact that their new home was quite decent, that there were, at least, ten Gates less than 40 kilometers away from Shiron and that the Shikan plains were a decent place for Tier-1 Ascenders to become stronger.

A wide variety of monsters resided on the Shikan planes, and there should be an even bigger variety within the Gates.

If not for his mood, he would have been exhilarated to enter the Gates, tear his opponents apart, and quench his thirst for dangerous fights as quickly as possible.

“What about everyone else? I think the Elite Combat Unit should follow the scouts. We cannot be certain that they won't encounter any dangers. As for the Auxiliary unit, they need more resources to produce goods now that many of them have gotten ability crystals suitable for the occupation they want to pursue in the Ancient Path of Advancement.”

Williams pointed out only a few things pertaining to only two units at that. It was no problem to take care of the Ascenders, who focused on combat. They could clear the city, search for Gates, or simply fight monsters.

However, the other Ascenders, especially those who picked occupations such as <Farmer>, <Lumberjack>, <Master of Mining>, <Great Engineer> when they advanced to Tier-1 via the Ancient Paths of Advancement, needed to complete specific tasks to fulfill their job's description.

There were also many Ascenders, who were eager to upgrade their occupation. Dilan was amongst these people as well.

It was only obvious that one wanted to increase their strength or efficiency by advancing their abilities.

However, this was not as easy as it might seem.

Dilan could injure himself severely right now, often enough to advance his ability to Tier-1, or possibly farther.

But each severe injury would prolong the remaining duration of his weakened state.

This was not something Dilan wanted to happen right now as the dangers of the surroundings were uncertain.

And even if it was safe for now, that didn't mean it would stay like that!

He once made a big mistake by injuring himself severely and potentially allowing a psychopath to kill his people. As such, Dilan had to be careful when to injure himself severely, how long he would be incapable of fighting in his peak state, and so on.

Meanwhile, his other abilities had a special condition to advance, which made it quite difficult because he only knew how his Immunity ability could be upgraded.

As for the other upgrade requirements, they were still invisible to him. Everyone else had faced a similar situation. If they met one requirement to upgrade an ability, it would be possible to see the remaining conditions as well.

After the upgrade, one would still see the requirements, which made things much easier.

Unfortunately, there was more than enough time, when it was quite difficult to meet the first requirement of an ability.

Dilan's [Thunder Step] was the best example of this. He was not sure what its upgrade requirements were, or how long it would take him to see its upgrade requirements!

Well, he had an inkling but Dilan had yet to test it out, simply because it was quite suicidal.

But it was not as if acting suicidal scared him...

Chapter 209 Weird Building

They talked until late at night before everyone had been given a task about what to do and how to distribute the tasks amongst the Survivors.

With 2500 Survivors by their side, they had more than enough working force to do something. However, while it was great to have so many Survivors to do all kinds of tasks, it was also a fact that they had a lot of preparations to do especially because their group was quite large.

Dilan slept for a few hours before he woke up not long after sunrise. There were lots of things for him to do but the first thing he did was to use his replenished Mana to use [Regeneration] over and over again.

Afterward, he ate some of the leftover food of the night before. He quickly bathed, prepared everything he needed, and set off not long after.

'It should be better for me to stay alone for the time being.' Dilan thought with a wry smile, knowing that he was ignoring the other's concern.

They knew that he was still in a weakened state and that it decreased his stats.

But even if he was not in his peak state right now, the only one who could come close to his combat prowess was probably Yvonne.

The others would have to go all out to fight him, the moment he made use of [Bracing Pain] and [Thunder Step].

Bracing pain was truly a powerful ability. Its downside might be that Dilan's strength only increased when he was injured and that he needed to be severely injured in order to gain a higher overall amplification but that was something Dilan could live with..

Pain was nothing new for him, and he had always lived with it. He was a bit different from others and had long since accepted this.

He was not worried about his own well-being or safety as he ran through the city. Rather, if someone was by his side, Dilan worried that they might have an unlucky encounter with a powerful monster and that the people by his side might get injured.

That was not something he wanted to happen, which was why Dilan went out all by himself to comb through the city in the hopes of finding a few Gates that were of great use to them.

Finding them was not really difficult. He had to search for areas where the mana density was higher, but that was the only issue.

Either, he would find monsters like the slimes, who were able to actively release mana, or he could find some treasures like the Stonemonkey Devial fruit, or a Gate.

All of that would be quite beneficial for their group.

'They forgot to bring the Mana Fog Slimes on the bus, so I cannot even think about creating a mana-rich environment for everyone to improve their proficiency with mana.'

In the end, improving one's proficiency over mana would be beneficial in many ways.

Right from a shorter duration to replenish Mana, to faster circulation of Mana which allowed an increased speed in activation of pieces of equipment, up to better control over abilities, everything had to do with Mana.

Dilan was aware of this so he was looking forward to the mana-rich areas in and near Shiron.

He expected a lot from them and was actually not disappointed by what he found in a matter of six hours.

It was necessary for him to spend the entire morning combing through Shiron, even though his Agility was high.

However, Dilan was not in a hurry and reminded himself to act with a calm head.

And this was certainly necessary because there were only a total of three mana-dense areas, two of which were barely perceptible.

One of the weaker mana-dense areas was a large corporate building that was overflowing with monsters.

Dilan didn't enter the building but he could tell that the number of monsters was already more than enough to create a small area that was filled with Mana.

'There is not a single Tier-1 monster inside, but there are far more than a thousand tierless monsters. Is there possibly a permanent Gate that is weaker than the Krendel's Underground Valley?'

Dilan shrugged his shoulders before he set his focus on the other mana-rich areas. Or at least that was what he wanted to do...

He knew that both were Gates but he didn't see many monsters in their proximity.

The last spot he had visited was just a little bit weird because the large building's appearance was different to the remaining buildings all over Shiron.

Instead of looking modern, the last building he visited had an old touch to its architecture.

Usually, Dilan wouldn't care about this but this time was different because a few things irked him about that place.

'Even if the mana density is amongst the lowest of the three mana-rich areas, why is that building so weird? It doesn't fit in this area, or the entire city...weird.'

Wait...is the building itself radiating mana?'

Turning back to the building that he had deemed unimportant just a moment earlier, Dilan felt a bit confused all of a sudden.

'Buildings shouldn't be able to radiate any mana.'

If that was the only problem, Dilan wouldn't feel odd all of a sudden. The sun temple was also a weird construct that had radiated Mana. That simply indicated the possibility of the weird old building being from somewhere else as well.

It might not necessarily be the case but Dilan had no other explanation.

By watching the building for some time he figured out a few things, which led him to approach the building once again.

However, now instead of looking through a window, Dilan walked towards the entrance door.

"As expected, another shitty place...or we'll see if it's shitty, to be precise." He blurted out in frustration as he read through the notification he received.

[Instance Dungeon <Pagoda of Time I>. Limitations: Maximum of 10 Ascenders, Tier-1 Level 15.]

“An Instance dungeon... Is that like in those games, where an area turns into a dungeon...and one can clear it with a maximum of 10 Ascenders below Level 16 at Tier-1...”

Dilan felt a little bit confused at the sight of the building that resembled a Pagoda the more he looked at it.

He had been able to look into it before but it was not actually dangerous enough for him to consider it a necessity to enter it with 10 Tier-1 Ascenders above Level 10.

‘Well, it’s merely a limitation. That doesn’t mean they need so many Ascenders at Tier-1 Level 15 to clear it...’

Just as Dilan made this clear for himself, he noticed that he had received not only one notification but two.

[First ‘Human’ to find the Instance dungeon <Pagoda of Time I>. Drop rate for unique loot has been doubled. Dungeon points awarded for conquering Instance Dungeons in a given period will be doubled for 24 hours!]

After carefully reading through the message once again, Dilan began to smile.

Excitement spread through his body, and for a short time, he forgot about Mason, his people, or the fact that he had to fulfill a heavy responsibility.

An opportunity had appeared in front of him and he didn’t feel like wasting it, at all.

Whether it was stupid or not, Dilan couldn’t care less. He felt like doing something reckless and potentially suicidal.

Thus, he simply did it...despite knowing that it was reckless and potentially suicidal. Without giving it another thought, he stepped through the Pagoda’s entrance and entered the Instance Dungeon; the Pagoda of Time!

Chapter 210 Pagoda of Time

[One participant detected, Tier-1, Level 8. Difficulty will be adjusted!]

“So it is like that?” He mumbled while stepping into the Pagoda of Time.

The interior looked just like he had expected. There was not a single piece of modern furniture anywhere. On the contrary, everything looked rather ancient.

As he roamed through the ground floor of the Pagoda, Dilan couldn’t see anything special, or so he thought.

At first, there were only a few monsters near the entrance, which he ignored to get a better understanding of the place he had entered voluntarily.

However, what Dilan didn’t expect to encounter upon entering the Pagoda’s large hall was that the interior looked several times larger than the size it should actually have.

“Is the space twisted, or is it similar to some storage device, where you can see the device but the interior is in an independent space?”

Of course, Dilan had no idea about the truth. He had practically no knowledge about space distortion, the magical things that were happening to Milarn, let alone what kind of miraculous places had been created due to the existence of Mana.

The Pagoda of Time was constructed like the Sun temple. Neither of them belonged to Milarn, and they had been brought over by someone, or something.

Dilan began to ignore the space distortion, or whatever increased the interior space of the Pagoda. He focused on his surroundings instead.

Several dozen Tier-1 monsters could be found walking through the Pagoda of Time..

All of them were bipedal and were also wielding weapons. However, they were roaming around in a group of five, astonishing Dilan slightly.

He saw some Goblins, some Kobolds, a bunch of Skeletons, Ghouls, and so on.

The living and the dead were together in one small place, not bothering to attack each other to get their hands on the other’s Essence crystals.

Dilan couldn’t help but be slightly confused at this sight but he still stepped forward while unsheathing the Blazing Serpentine Blade.

“None of you guys seem strong, so die quickly, will you?” Dilan had been excited to fight some powerful opponents.

However, the monsters in front of him were merely ordinary Tier-1 monsters. They might be around his level, potentially a few levels lower than him but that didn’t matter, at all.

He brandished the serpent-form of the Blazing Serpentine Blade without bothering to engulf it in flames before slashing it through the room viciously.

The monsters had just taken note of him but before they could even dare to attack him, Dilan had already begun to butcher them.

Their average stats were around 15, so their strength was not even close to being high enough to fight Dilan head-on.

His strength might have decreased due to his weakened state but his Agility still exceeded 40.

With fast movements but a calm mind that was yearning for more excitement, he slaughtered the few dozen monsters around him.

It didn’t take him long to achieve this and he would have been faster if he had wanted to.

However, Dilan simply advanced to the second floor by using the stairway to his right.

[First floor has been cleared successfully. Time required [4:39]. Excellent! A new record for the <Solo> Modi’s first floor has been set.]

He raised his right eyebrow when he read this message but Dilan didn't say anything. He had reached the second floor and looked at the monsters that were walking through the second place as if it belonged to them.

'Same strength, higher number, I see.'

Brandishing the Blazing Serpentine Blade once again, Dilan enveloped it in flames.

Afterward, he used 15 Mana units to activate [Mana Slash] before he attacked the dozens of monsters with a more than 20-meter-long crescent-shaped Mana Slash, slashing horizontally.

In an instant, more than three dozen ordinary Tier-1 monsters were killed. Dilan finished off the remaining monsters with rapid speed before he passed through the second floor as well.

'I can pick up their Essence crystals later as setting up a better record should provide me with more Dungeon points...I guess.'

With that in mind, Dilan didn't halt in his tracks, and he rushed up the stairs to reach the third floor as quickly as possible.

[Second floor has been cleared successfully. Time required [1:09]. Grandiose! A new record for the <Solo> Modi's second floor has been set.]

Dilan nodded in satisfaction before rushing off once again. He didn't use [Mana Slash] this time because it used up too much mana, but that was not necessary either way.

The Blazing Serpentine Blade was already powerful enough to achieve everything he wanted to, at a rapid pace at that.

If not for his restricted stats and condition, Dilan would have been even faster. However, in the end, his speed was still terrifying as he crushed the 100+ opponents in no time.

[3:31] Grandiose!

Afterward, he entered the fourth floor.

150 Ordinary Tier-1 monsters were killed in no time, and Dilan gained another <Grandiose!> from a notification.

When he reached the fifth floor, the first Bronze Tier-1 monsters appeared.

However, their strength was still lower than his. Dilan defeated them in less than 10 minutes, ending the battle quickly.

Dilan lost track of time as he kept advancing through the floors of the Pagoda of Time.

At first, he had been sure that the Pagoda of Time would somehow be related to "Time", and that he would be stuck in this place for a specific duration in which he had to survive or something like that.

But the reality was a little bit different.

He didn't have to stay here longer than he wanted to. Rather, the time he needed to clear each floor was noted down and marked by the systematic behind the building.

Dilan was not sure what use this had or why a building that would reward him for rapidly conquering the floors existed in the first place.

According to him, it provided no benefit to the being that had brought this place to Shiron.

At least this was Dilan's assumption.

He was not sure what use it had for that being if he were to keep conquering the floors, kill thousands of monsters in a matter of hours, get his hands on the monster's Essence crystals and on the Dungeon points he was promised to be awarded.

After Dilan reached the 10th floor, the first Silver Tier-1 monsters appeared.

They were already much harder to defeat in higher numbers and had many Bronze Tier-1 monsters by their side which increased the difficulty of the task.

However, Dilan's strength was more than enough for him to defeat his opponents.

But instead of continuing to advance, he stopped all of a sudden as realization struck him.

"Is the Pagoda of Time gathering information on my combat style and strength in exchange for providing me with resources?!?"