

Warlord 21

Chapter 21 Delight

While Oliver and the others spent the entire afternoon throwing all the zombie corpses out of the second-floor windows, they were astonished to see fire-spewing birds flying through the air.

They looked like robins but were the size of bald eagles.

However, this was not the most astonishing fact because they saw that humans on the ground were hunting the fire-spewing birds.

Fighting against the birds, the group of humans was able to conjure earth spikes from the ground and threw them high, aiming for the birds in the air.

Meanwhile, when the bird counterattacked by spewing flames on the human group, a semi-translucent dome suddenly popped up, protecting them from the blazing flames.

It had been so interesting that they all forgot to dispose of the bodies and instead watched the fight with curiosity. The fight ended shortly after, and the group of humans disappeared.

But their fight left a huge impact on everyone, clearly showing that there was hope for mankind to survive this apocalypse.

Yet, when Jack saw the fight, his interest was automatically drawn to the abilities used by the fighters than the humans themselves.

They were powerful and clearly exceeded human norms.

As such, Jack was able to convince his small group of loyal followers to pick up the weapons manufactured out of the rat horns to leave for a night hunt!

All of them were eager to become stronger, but Jack's plan was not the same as the one he told his followers.

But that was only something the three loyal followers noticed way too late.

Tiptoeing their way out of the cafeteria, they rushed through the entrance hall up the stairs.

When they reached the second floor, even Jack couldn't help but feel slightly nervous..

However, that was not something he could reveal in front of the others.

"The right corridor should have a few more zombies than the one in the front. So let's first clear the one at the front!"

When they had cleared the hall on the second floor earlier, the right corridor had been the easiest to be quickly sealed.

As such, the front corridor was the best choice for now!

With that in mind, Jack stepped ahead, faking his confidence, only to halt in his tracks when he reached the automatic door.

Taking a backward glance at his team members, he suggested,

“Let’s first kill one each. Like that, we can test if my theory about the first kill is correct!”

To do so, he wanted to open the door just enough to let four zombies pass-through for each of them to kill.

“If you guys make a commotion further away, I can hide behind the corner, and close the door once four zombies pass through this door.

Guys, I trust you. Tell me when the fourth pass through because I won’t be able to take a peek!”

Jack knew that the tactic was quite risky, but the rewards would be far higher.

And there was no time for him to lose anymore.

Dilan was obviously training both Oliver and Ailee to strengthen them and turn them into his aids.

And, Jack didn’t want to lose his dream before it even took shape.

Thus, Jack tweaked his plan and decided to take others under his wing.

Once everyone was ready, he ignored the others’ fear, and pressed the emergency button, releasing the seal on the automatic door.

Afterward, he was only able to take a single glance in the corridor before he rushed back to hide behind the corner.

“Hey you ugly, rotten pieces of trash, I’m here!!” One of the young followers shouted, attracting the zombies in the direction of the door that had opened all of a sudden.

“I’m fresh and tasty, come here!!” Another one of Jack’s followers shouted in a quivering voice.

Meanwhile, the third one remained silent, looking at the situation ahead intently.

Several zombies approached the door, and the silent follower lifted his hand indicating that the first zombie passed by.

Just two seconds later he waved his hand down, signaling Jack to move.

With an Agility stat of 1.5, Jack shot around the corner, pushing away the zombie that entered through the door.

Through this, the other zombies were blocked as well, and Jack instantly leaped towards the red emergency button, which he pressed in an instant.

Afterward, he was forced to trust that the door would close as the zombies lunged after him.

Jumping backward, Jack saw that a total of five zombies had managed to enter through the door before it began to close.

This was not as planned but still fine.

Evading the zombie’s hands and their rotten face, he reached the other three followers.

They were frightened but quickly sensed that the zombie's speed was not too fast for them to do something.

Jack clearly told them how they should move, and what the easiest way to kill them was.

Trusting him with all their heart, they followed his instructions.

Meanwhile, Jack was simply using his high agility to shoot toward one zombie before he pierced the horn into its head.

Earlier he was scared shitless to encounter zombies and fight them.

It was frightening to think that a single scratch of a zombie would be enough to turn him into one of them.

But when he noticed that his movement speed was much higher than the zombies, he grew confident.

Right now, only greed was apparent in his mind; the greed to grow stronger by all means.

This greed allowed him to kill the zombie in front of him with the rat horn dagger he had manufactured.

It was far easier than expected, and his face shone with excitement.

His smile widened when he saw that a grayish essence crystal appeared seemingly out of nowhere.

The only thing Jack could sense was a stream of energy that was drained from the zombie.

It was probably the source of energy that created the ability crystal.

He noticed that the others were struggling to kill their opponents.

But before he could rush to their aid, the ability crystal crumbled in Jack's hand.

Without taking a look at the notification that popped up in front of him, he pushed ahead and killed the zombie to procure their ability crystal.

Afterward, his eyes gleamed brightly as he began to pierce through the vital points of the other zombies so as to severely injure them.

His movements were extremely fast, and it was almost like he had been freed from the shackles that were holding him back.

A feeling of exhilaration coursed through his body which was his first experience of killing a monster in his life but he knew that it would quickly turn addictive.

It made him feel confident as he felt power seep into his muscles and bones like never before.

Life and death were in his hands and he could change the fates of those around him!

Yet, he held back from killing the other zombies, because the others had to obtain an ability crystal first.

However, when the battle was over, and the others had killed their first opponent, Jack was not able to smile anymore.

Instead he felt that something was odd as the sound of growling zombies was still loud and clear.

Thus, his head turned towards the corridor, and a frown appeared on his entire face instantaneously.

He saw that the head of a zombie was stuck between the automatic door.

It couldn't close owing to the head, and only a few seconds later several arms of zombies squeezed through the door's gap.

The door began to rattle and the shaking intensified as more and more zombies began to push themselves against the door.

It was at this moment that Jack realized that his plan had not been completely foolproof.

However, instead of running away in an instant, he looked at the grayish ability crystals in the hands of his loyal followers, and a dark glint emerged in his eyes.

A wicked plan formed his head, and in order to attain everything he wanted, his individual strength had to be much higher than right now!

As such, he took the most rational decision in his life; he got rid of some unnecessary baggage.

"Oh...looks like you were scratched by one of the zombies...I'm sorry but can you please die?"

Jack's words resounded next to the three followers, who looked at Jack in unison. They had been extremely careful while fighting their opponents.

Thus all three of them were quite certain that they had not been scratched.

Yet, Jack had already lashed out with the rat horn dagger, piercing through the first follower as warm blood splattered through the surroundings.

'But why...I'm unscathed...'

Chapter 22 Bloodlust

The moment the dagger pierced through his first loyal follower, Jack's eyes gleamed brightly.

Blood splattered on his face, only for his maniacal expression to brighten up even more.

To everyone who saw this, it was as if a devil had been unleashed within Jack.

But he couldn't care less what the others thought of him as he pushed the dying young man towards the other follower, who stared at Jack in disbelief and fear.

However, Jack had already turned toward the silent man in their group with a wide and evil smile on his face.

Using his speed that had further increased, he pierced the dagger's blade through the throat of the young man and mercilessly pulled it out a moment later.

No sooner had he pulled the dagger to attack the third one, than he heard a growl to his side. The last living follower had been bitten by the comrade that he had killed with his dagger thrust and turned into a zombie.

Apparently, when Jack killed his first victim, the blood and rotten flesh sticking to the dagger blade caused an accelerated zombification.

Pushing away his old comrade and friend, desperation filled the last follower's eyes as he jumped from the ground before rushing towards the stairs.

Fueled by desperation to save himself, he ran much faster than ever before.

Yet, this was not something Jack could care about.

He was simply looking at this with a faint smile on his face as he calmly picked up the ability crystal of the man he just killed..

"Looks like killing is much easier than expected. Why was I even so afraid of it before?" He mumbled, before piercing his dagger through the head of the young man, who had turned into a zombie.

Afterward, he picked up his ability crystal as well.

Holding two of them in his hands, he couldn't help but smile before he mumbled,

"It's a shame that they have a requirement to be learned, but let me fix that later...for now I should clear all evidence...everything looks like an accident, either way... we were just too excited to go out hunting...yes, that's it!"

With a vile smile on his face, he held the three ability crystals tightly, while moving the dagger in his other hand.

Afterward, he shot down the stairs following the last of his followers, who had been bitten in his leg.

'Maybe I should have shot them. That would have made everything so much easier.' He grumbled to himself and realized that he had reached the cafeteria.

This clearly told him that he had no time to lose. The moment his last loyal follower reached the cafeteria, things were bound to become more difficult.

Thus, with a swift movement, he pocketed the two ability crystals.

He halted in his tracks, unholstered the gun that he always took with him, before aiming at the young man.

"Helppp!! Help me please!!! He is insane!" The man's voice resounded through the entire first floor, waking up the Survivors, who had been deep asleep in the cafeteria.

Dilan, who had been sleeping lightly jumped up from the ground, all traces of drowsiness washed away from his eyes upon hearing the desperate cry for help.

With a quick glance, he could tell that Jack and his followers were missing.

This was enough for his brain to shoot him loud blaring alarms of what must have happened.

It was also quite easy to understand that the furniture in front of the cafeteria had been moved.

'How could I not hear this?' He wondered for a moment, only to be distracted by an unexpected sound.

BANG

A gunshot resounded through the cafeteria, followed by a thumping sound.

As he stared in the direction of the noise, the doors of the cafeteria were pushed open as a corpse fell through it.

Blood seeped out of the bullet hole in the young man's neck, who tried to speak but only managed to utter a few incomprehensible words as blood trickled out of his mouth.

His eyes turned lifeless and he fell down.

However, the horror that unfolded in front of everyone was not yet over as Jack emerged above the young man lying on the ground before he shot him twice in the head.

At this moment, everyone could see Jack's bloodied face that shone with a wicked delight.

It was just a moment later that he recalled where he was. His expression changed at once, as he blurted out,

"He was bitten, I had to save you guys!"

His voice didn't sound scared, at all, and each word he spoke was firm.

If it hadn't been for the delight on Jack's face just a moment ago, he might have tricked most Survivors into believing him.

But right now, everyone looked at him in fear, and their earlier trust in Jack was washed away as they began to doubt what was going on.

Was he really telling the truth, or was there something more to it?

"Where are the other two?" Ailee asked doubtfully. She was still shocked by what she had just seen, but somehow, her gut feeling told her that it was not yet done.

"They died after we killed some zombies to get our first abilities!" Jack said hurriedly and cast a backward glance before adding,

"The door of the front corridor on the second floor cannot close anymore. A zombie's head was stuck in it, and I believe that the zombies will break it soon!"

Changing the subject as quickly as possible, Jack was able to make use of the fear of some Survivors to throw them off track.

They looked behind him and sighed in relief when they saw that there was not a single zombie in the small hallways that might have followed him.

"Le..Let's first move the furnit--..." Bianne began to stutter, and her entire body was trembling as she looked at the corpse of the young man.

She had been talking to him not long ago, and only stopped speaking when she got interrupted.

“If I take a look at him, will I really see a scratch or bite mark?” Dilan suddenly asked, ignoring Bianne’s concern.

In the end, Dilan was fine with having jerks around him, but Jack clearly crossed the line right now.

His greed and hunger for power were waving off of him and it was quite obvious what he had done to the other men, who had followed him.

At least, he was able to sense it quite clearly.

That was why he approached the corpse of the young man with the Reinforced Stone spear in his hand.

Jack had taken a step away from the corpse just a few seconds earlier.

But when he saw Dilan nearing the corpse after stating his intention to inspect it, Jack instinctively moved toward the corpse.

His mind was rattling and was trying to figure a way out of the problematic situation that unfolded in front of him.

‘You fucking bastard! I almost did it!!’ Jack could only think in frustration.

At this moment, the ability he bound was fully unleashed as a crimson color gleam emerged in his eyes.

[[Bloodlust] Tier-0★★

Host is delighted by the sight of blood, and receives additional enhancements when killing. The more beings the host kills the stronger the enhancement.

Passive effect- Additional enhancement triggered when the host feels the overwhelming wrath towards a specific being. +20% increment in all stats!

Side effect- Unable to hide his emotions, gets easily enraged.]

Lifting the Glock 18, Jack pointed it at Dilan, his index finger lightly holding the trigger.

“I had enough of you, just go fuck yourself!” He growled, pulling the trigger without any hesitation.

Bang

Just a moment later, Dilan was shot and the entire world turned dark.

Chapter 23 Death

Dilan’s eyes widened when he saw the crimson glint in Jack’s eyes.

But before he could move, the room began to spin in front of him as blood splashed on the ground.

Bang

Jack shot at him without hesitation and had a faint smile of satisfaction on his face.

The bullet pierced through his skin and flesh, entering his chest.

It had been such a shocking and unexpected move of Jack that Dilan took a moment to process that he had been shot.

His hands clutched his chest and he saw his fingers soaked in his own blood. With wide eyes he stared at his hand and then his chest before his legs gave in as he slumped to the ground.

His sight blurred and he could barely keep his eyes open, trying to not fall unconscious.

It was truly unexpected that Jack shot at him, while everyone else was witnessing the situation.

Even Ailee and Oliver couldn't help but freeze in place, while Sarah gasped in shock.

Everyone was staring at Jack in disbelief, looking at the way he was grinning after committing the crime that happened right in front of them.

All of them were too afraid to confront Jack who basked in their fear of him. .

Nobody restricted his movement, which allowed him to approach Dilan, vile excitement spread through his entire face.

“Arhhh, that feels nice, finally! It was about time that you figure out who the leader here is. You could have lived a little bit longer, but you just had to meddle in my business, didn't you?”

Jack knew that Dilan wouldn't be able to answer properly.

He presumed that Dilan's lung was injured, but that was not something Jack could tell for sure.

It didn't matter, either way, because Dilan was bound to die!

Standing in front of Dilan, Jack smiled brightly as he lifted his leg before he shoved his leg hard in Dilan's stomach, who could not even scream in pain.

The wind was knocked out of his lungs and Dilan could only gasp for air. From the corner of his eyes he saw the Log of the Ancient, and the health stat that decreased at a rapid pace.

As such, he instinctively used some status points to increase his health stat to [4].

The pain in his chest was too high for him to look at the notification that popped up the moment he reached a health stat of 4 points.

He was just trying his best to survive.

With his survival on the line, he used his Origin ability [Regeneration] to drain him of one unit of mana.

But this barely gave him the necessary energy to move his arm and grasp Jack's ankle.

Using his strength stat of [1.8], Dilan tried to squash Jack's ankle, but his efforts were futile.

Angered by Dilan's attempt, Jack simply kicked again, freeing himself before pointing the gun right at Dilan's face.

It was odd, Dilan could clearly tell that the bullet hadn't deeply pierced into his chest.

Nonetheless, he felt extremely weak, as fresh blood gushed out of the bullet hole.

Staring straight at Jack's face that was filled with hatred, Dilan knew that he wouldn't hesitate to shoot again.

"It feels so great to see you desperately fighting for your life. You really are the best, Dilan, THE best!! You are bleeding like the pig you are, what a lovely sight!"

He was enjoying the torture that made him feel so high that he forgot the entire world around him.

Nothing but his desire to torture, and finally kill Dilan mattered to at this very moment.

As such, once he had enough, Jack's eyes turned cold before he grumbled with an ice-cold voice that was overflowing with his intent to kill Dilan.

"But now, I want to see a different picture of you...a dead pig! DIE!!!"

Shouting out the last word with all his accumulated hatred for the young man, who had caused much more disruption to all of his plans than everyone else present together, Jack moved his index finger around the trigger of his gun and pulled it.

BANG

Just when Jack finished speaking, a bullet was shot.

The gunshot's noise reverberated through the entire cafeteria, reaching the ears of everyone, only for eerie silence to permeate the air.

It was only when the sound of a body collapsing to the ground with a thud echoed through the cafeteria was one able to hear the desperate tries of someone to catch a breath.

Time seemed to have slowed down in the last moments, but what everyone had clearly seen was a bullet piercing through Jack's head, before he slumped to the ground, dead.

The eyes of more than 10 Survivors moved towards the direction the bullet had been fired from, and they saw Ailee standing there, holding the other gun.

She had shot Jack before he was able to fire at Dilan!

Her legs were shivering before giving in when her mind registered that she had just killed a human.

Even if pulling the trigger was exactly the same as shooting zombies and shooting a human, right now, it felt like a dark shadow was hovering over her heart and trying to drag her down into a bottomless pit.

A moment later, she just began to cry as her grip around the Glock loosened.

The gun clamored to the ground as she continued to whimper.

Meanwhile, everyone else was still frozen, looking at the corpse of the man they had trusted with their lives.

On the other hand, Dilan felt that the pain in his chest worsened as he began to writhe in pain.

His cries of agony and help pulled several Survivors out of their trance.

They realized that Dilan was not yet dead, and looking at his condition, there was still some time left for him before he would succumb to his injuries.

Overcoming their initial shock of the gruesome situation that had just occurred, two women in their 50s looked at each other before nodding their heads in unison.

Contrary to most of the other Survivors, the two women were veteran nurses.

They had seen far more deaths and blood than the majority of people here.

As such, even if the given situation was horrifying, they were able to remain somewhat calm.

“We have to stop the bleeding!” One of the older women exclaimed hurriedly, approaching Dilan with fast strides.

They seldom came across many patients that were shot, as the Rian mountainside hospital was right next to a mountain and a forest.

And though it was rare to treat someone with a gunshot wound, once or twice Hunters would accidentally shoot hikers while shooting other animals.

Furthermore, there were some gangs in Rian, and the surrounding cities, with quite some fights breaking out every now and then.

As such, they roughly knew what to do.

Pressing her hand on top of the bullet hole, the old woman quickly noticed that she needed to put more pressure on the wound to make the bleeding stop.

As such she changed her stance and used her knees instead of her hands. She even leaned forward, using her entire strength.

At this moment, a crack could be heard as one of Dilan’s ribs gave in.

However, that was not something the nurse could care about right now.

Even if they were not too fond of Dilan, they needed him, now more than ever before!

Jack was dead, the three loyal followers of him had been killed, and if Jack’s words had been the truth, the front corridor on the second floor was bound to break open, releasing more zombies!

“Don’t die!!”

Chapter 24 Open surgery

While one nurse tried to stop the bleeding with all her might and weight, the other one snatched the gun Jack had dropped to the ground before removing the magazine.

Taking one bullet in her hand, she examined it for a few seconds before tilting her head.

“They should be...made out of an alloy of copper and zinc?”

It was obvious that she was not certain about the answer, and the only thing that she knew was that the bullet was not made out of lead.

Thus, it was a small success. Lead bullets were far more toxic than those made of other metals or alloys.

“He has only one bullet hole, right? That means the bullet is still inside him...but that should be fine if I’m correct with my assumption...”

Owing to the events that occurred just a few moments ago, the nurse was obviously overwhelmed.

Nevertheless, she gave her best efforts to help her companion in any possible way.

After the older nurse used her knee to block the bullet hole, the bleeding stopped and the puddle of blood on the ground around Dilan didn’t enlarge.

As such, they presumed that there was only one bullet within his body!

“Re..move...bullet...” Dilan could barely say while taking several heavy breaths, but the older nurse shook her head vehemently.

“That’s impossible, we don’t have the necessary surgery tools, and even if we had them, this room is full of bacteria, we cannot cut you open, just like that..

Other than that, we need an anesthetic, otherwise, you would flop like a fish on land the moment we start cutting you open!”

Afterward, the other nurse added,

“And we are nurses, not surgeons. We might accidentally cut your veins and arteria while trying to save you! Furthermore, If the bullet is stuck somewhere near your arteria which is blocking it, and we remove it, you will really start bleeding like a pig!!”

Under normal circumstances, all of their comments would have made sense.

However, they didn’t live in a normal world anymore, and the situation at hand was certainly not normal.

But even then, the bullet could remain within him until they found the necessary surgery tools, and possibly a surgeon as well.

One of them might have survived.

The chance was certainly there, but Dilan didn’t want to rely on such a possibility.

His [Lesser Immunity] ability would help him overcome the situation if one was just talking about the issue of bacteria, dirty clothes that clung to his body, and the poisonous material of the bullet.

Yet, even then, Dilan couldn’t agree because he knew that he would die if the bullet were to remain inside him.

He had to heal as quickly as possible, using the [Regeneration] Origin ability.

“No...N..Now...otherwise, I..die!”

They had yet to take a proper look at his wound, but after hearing his words, they began to frown.

At this moment, Oliver stepped forward as he hurriedly added,

“When he cleared the hallway between the cafeteria and the entrance hall, we saw that one of the rooms had multiple sterilizers if I’m not mistaken.

There should be a few surgery tools such as a scalpel, tweezers, and so on, right?”

Looking at Dilan’s deteriorating condition, Oliver could only try his best to help.

Turning towards him, the older nurse, whose knee was almost pressing into Dilan’s throat curse out,

“Fuck it. Bring us everything you can find...”

If Dilan said that he would die if the bullets wouldn’t be removed, there had to be some truth to it.

After all, it was very unlikely for him to trust the two old nurses with his life, who didn’t even like him.

Dilan was fully aware of this, which made it clear that he was forced to rely on them in order to survive.

Both nurses knew weirdos like Dilan. They didn’t like to rely on others and only did so if they would be unable to overcome on their own.

And such a situation happened just now.

Thus, with Oliver rushing out of the room, followed by Sarah, who wanted to help out as well, they came back holding small boxes of various surgical tools.

Rushing back, they dashed to the room once or twice and brought every single thing that looked somewhat useful.

As such, in a matter of minutes, they made the necessary preparations possible and started an operation with two corpses next to them.

Looking at the scalpel in her hand, the older nurse could only sigh deeply, not believing what she was about to do before she looked at Dilan’s wound.

For the entire time, they maintained a high pressure on the bullet hole. Adding Dilan’s high healing capacities and his Origin ability, the bleeding had lessened.

This allowed them to see a little bit more, only to figure out that the injury was worse than expected.

‘At least his internal organs aren’t injured...even if everything else looks like it was a wreck...’ The old nurse could only think as she began her work, hoping for the best while praying to whichever God was observing them right now.

Gritting his teeth, Dilan could only force his entire body to stand still. His eyes were tightly shut, while he tried hard to not focus on how a part of his chest was cut open.

He was not sure how much time passed, but after he felt the nurses cut through his skin, he sensed cold metal touching the inside of his body.

He could barely control himself from flinching and simply clenched his fists while groaning out in pain. The painkillers they had found were not even remotely comparable to proper anesthetics that would numb his senses.

Still, it helped a little bit.

Forcing his entire body under control was certainly not easy, but somehow, he endured it.

Whether it was half an hour later, or several hours that they would finish taking the bullet out was uncertain.

Dilan had no idea of how much time had passed but it felt like ages already as he was hyperaware of pain shooting up through every single nerve in his chest.

Meanwhile, the nurse disinfected his chest once again before she pulled out the long tweezers with the bullet held in it.

When the bullet was finally out of his body, Oliver, Ailee, and the others sighed in relief.

“You did a great job!” The older nurse could only say as cold sweat trickled down her temples, while the other nurse began to bandage him.

Dilan didn’t move much during the entire bullet-removal process which was exceptional.

After all, it had been far more dangerous and risky than she presumed.

The bullet had not pierced deep into Dilan, but his body had looked like a mess before she started the process.

And after she removed the bullet, he began to bleed severely!

As such, the old nurse had been sure that Dilan would die of blood loss, but somehow the bleeding lessened all of a sudden.

He was still bleeding but it was not that heavy anymore.

If the old nurse were to know that it was because of Dilan using the [Regeneration] Origin ability once again, she might not be as astonished and relieved as she was now.

However, even then, the fact that Dilan was still alive could be considered a miracle, or a clear sign that the mortal norms didn’t apply to the existences that had already begun their Ascension towards unfathomable strength!

Dilan was just thankful for the help he received.

He lifted his right arm before he gave them a thumbs up, as he smiled weakly.

“Thanks for everything!” He managed to say a few words.

Afterward, he used his remaining 0.7 unallocated status points to increase his mana stat to [2] before he used the [Regeneration] ability once again.

Just a moment later, he could already feel that his body was healing and that his bleeding had slowly stopped.

This caused a faint smile of satisfaction to appear on his face.

“Thanks...” He said, only for exhaustion to take over.

His eyelids grew heavy and he was forced into a deep slumber, which his body desperately required.

Chapter 25 Comfort

For the first time in years, Dilan woke up with a faint smile on his lips.

'I am still alive!' He thought, happy to feel pain coursing through his chest.

Trying to lift his upper body, he noticed that every single move made his muscles ache terribly, and the first Survivor to notice that he had woken up quickly approached Dilan.

"Don't move. You have to rest! The two nurses said that your wound might tear open again if you move... If you need something just ask, I might be able to help!"

Dilan had not expected to be cared for and receive nice treatment after being shot by someone he had trusted a bit.

Thus, he couldn't help but turn his head towards another man, who was in his 30s with visible confusion in his eyes.

"How long have I been knocked out?"

Dilan had no idea what time it was, or how long he had been knocked out.

He faintly recalled having woken up a few times, before using his Origin ability, only to collapse once again.

As such, his body was in a much better condition than before after having rested a bit.

But even then, it was impossible for him to move properly without the fear of tearing his wound open.

This only showed that his earlier condition was much worse than expected as his endurance and healing capabilities were four times the average of an ordinary human before the Primordial Ascension..

Meanwhile, the passive and active effect of his ability should be enough to accelerate his healing even more.

"You slept for...16 hours, I guess?" The young man answered before saying,

"By the way, Ailee took your spear to hunt her first zombie. She thought that you wouldn't need it for the time being. So don't worry too much about that."

Dilan just nodded his head, before his stomach began to grumble.

"Is there some leftover food from lunch? I could eat a whole cow right now..."

Nodding his head, the man rushed into the kitchen and returned with a few pieces of bread and some spicy beef stew.

Because the Survivors had many things to talk about and even more tasks at hand, they had set aside a large pot of stew for everyone to have whenever they felt hungry.

This made things much easier and it didn't require many ingredients to be cooked either.

Slowly pushing himself into a sitting position, Dilan leaned against the wall behind him before he was handed the bowl of stew and bread slices.

Only then did he clearly understand that he had been shifted to a different place instead of the familiar corner where he usually slept.

“Did everyone recover from the shock of yesterday’s incident...I mean mentally? And is everyone out hunting? I think quite a few Survivors are missing.”

Dilan wanted to know what had happened in the last 16 hours, thus Richard, the man in his 30s, answered him with some discomfort in his eyes.

“If they recovered from the incident? Well...I think nobody can trust anyone anymore, so I don’t think we can go back to being completely trustful of each other. Oliver, Ailee, and a few others went out hunting, yes.

We decided that everyone should help out hunting, or at the very least, kill one zombie in order to procure an ability crystal.

Like this, everyone does something for the group’s survival. If someone wants to continue hunting, they can do so, but if they don’t want to, they should just hand over the ability crystal, and do other chores to help the group in whatever way they can.”

This was quite a surprise, and Dilan couldn’t help but look at Richard with slight astonishment.

He had not expected that someone like Bianne, and a few other Survivors would dare to go out and hunt zombies.

But when Dilan recalled that Jack killed his three loyal followers, and nearly him as well, he could only nod his head.

While having the stew, he figured that it was quite tasty, which Richard noticed from his expressions.

He gave him a second helping of the soup before starting to speak once again,

“The door of the front corridor on the second floor broke open, and the others have already procured a few ability crystals by killing some zombies.

But for now, most Survivors decided to use the ability crystals they were able to procure and hunt a minimum of three more zombies each to gain a few status points.

As such, we have only three extra ability crystals. Now that you are awake we can decide which one of us gets another ability.”

Richard’s summary was quite helpful, which was why Dilan thanked him.

‘So everyone’s trust has been shattered, and they chose to level up as well. That’s quite risky but definitely good.’ The more survivors decided to fight and to become stronger, the better.

It would make things much easier. Maybe they would be able to clear the first and second floor after he was fully healed and well-rest.

Once that was done, they could find out more about the Gates as well, and if it was possible to use them to their advantage.

Quite a few thoughts flashed through his mind, and after he was done eating, Richard took the soup bowl and spoon before leaving him alone.

Looking around, he noticed that almost every survivor was doing something or the other. This was great as well, indicating showing that everyone now understood that reality was far from their wishful thinking.

'Looks like the incident with Jack allowed everyone to realize that they can only survive if they work as well. Lazing around doing nothing will just kill them.'

In total, they were now 16 Survivors, and if all of them were to work together, it would be a perfect team.

Unfortunately, the trust issue seemed to be quite big because nobody was really talking with each other. They were simply doing their work and keeping to themselves.

But before he could even ask himself if there was something he could do to help everyone, the doors of the cafeteria opened, and he saw Bianne and Sarah enter the room.

Bianne saw that Dilan was awake and thought about something.

However, she only bit her lip, shook her head, and left instead of talking to him.

She wanted to apologize for shooting him but felt incapable of doing so.

Meanwhile, Sarah approached him with slight astonishment, not expecting that he would already be fit enough to lift himself up in a sitting position.

"You two went hunting as well?" He just asked as he saw Sarah walking towards him.

"We wanted to become Ascenders as well!" Sarah answered with a faint smile on her face. Seeing that Dilan was fine made her feel both happy and relieved.

Having faced a group of three zombies was already enough for her to be pressured. If it was not for Oliver's help, she would have died earlier.

As such, with another powerful Ascender by their side, it would be much easier to clear the first and second floor of the hospital.

"Ascender? Where does that name come from all of a sudden?" He asked her with an amused smile as Sarah looked at Oliver, who had just returned from their hunt.

"It was Oliver's idea, and I think it's quite suitable, don't you think so?"

Somehow, Dilan felt like her voice was filled with warmth and joy.

This astonished him quite a bit, and he began to ask himself why everyone was being so nice to him all of a sudden.

'Did I do something while being unconscious?'

However, what Dilan didn't know was that he had replaced Jack as their leader and had become one of the only people the others trusted a bit.

From the beginning, Dilan had never particularly tried to be overly nice to anyone, and he didn't even think of favoring anyone because of whatever reason.

That was, at least, what he thought about himself, even if it might not be true in reality.

Dilan was just a grumpy young man, who would do everything to survive.

As such, his goal was never hidden from anyone, and after observing him for some time, one could notice that he took care of people around him in a rather subtle and subconscious manner and wouldn't make a big show of how helpful he was.

If one didn't pay attention to him, one wouldn't even notice this.

Because of that, even though he was intimidating, and certainly not afraid of clearly stating his opinion, the others felt that it would be quite difficult for him to lie or betray them owing to his character.

That gave them a little bit of comfort and reassurance in a world that seemed to have gone insane.

Chapter 26 Exceeding Expectations

Looking at Oliver, Dilan nodded his head.

"Ascender...sounds nice." He remarked before Sarah turned around to Oliver, and waved her hand at him.

"Oliver! Come here, Dilan woke up!"

When Oliver heard his name, he looked in the direction of Sarah, and his eyes fell on Dilan.

This made him smile as he hurried over.

"You look great, Dilan! Maybe you will be fit in a week or two? Your injury was quite bad after all..."

Dilan was not sure why Oliver was so excited to see him, but he simply smiled in response, unsure of being able to fully recover in a day or so.

His mana refilled quite quickly, and he was trying to figure out how to perceive the mana in the surroundings to hasten up the process even further.

But before revealing anything, he wanted to test out a few things, which was why he didn't speak about his experiment.

"I heard that the front corridor on the second door has been broken. Are there many zombies outside, or is it still safe to make use of?"

Oliver wanted to know more about Dilan's condition and force him to rest, but that was not what Dilan seemed to plan.

Thus, he could only smile weirdly before he answered,

“It is a little bit more complicated because there are more zombies than expected, but most of them are still level 0. That made it a little bit easier for me to help the others to get their first kill.

But some zombies have leveled up, and it is quite difficult to differentiate between them at the first glance. So we almost had a few casualties yesterday..

We also reached the second floor and tried to block the front corridor, but the others didn’t want to continue because the sounds coming from the left corridor were a little bit odd.”

Getting to know that some zombies had already leveled up and that the left corridor was having some issues, Dilan could tell that he had to hasten up his recuperation.

With that in mind, he immediately made use of his Origin ability.

Afterward, he took a glance at the Log of the Ancient, where he noticed a big exclamation mark on the upper right side and pressed it out of curiosity.

[[-[Lesser Immunity] Ungraded ★★★-

1) Essence of '30' infected monsters has been absorbed

2) Health property of -4- has been reached

Upgrade to Ungraded ★★★★★]]

‘I knew that I was forgetting something.’ Dilan thought before disregarding his immunity ability once again.

It was a passive ability that didn’t really change much about his physique or anything around that.

The only upside was that he knew that he wouldn’t get an infection due to the bullet hole, which was quite good for the healing process.

Keeping his own ability in mind, he recalled the three abilities that belonged to the three men Jack had killed.

“Alright. If it’s quite complicated right now, how about we figure out how to distribute the three ability crystals after everyone is here?”

Upon hearing Dilan’s question, Oliver’s eyes gleamed in excitement. He had been the gatekeeper of the three ability crystals. As such, he knew what the abilities were.

He was eager to get one but knew that it had to be distributed with everyone’s agreement. Otherwise, the already shaky and wavering trust within the survivors would completely disappear.

With that in mind, Oliver jumped up before he called everyone.

“Guys, we would like to start with the distribution of the three remaining ability crystals. Everyone is here, right?”

Everybody stopped doing whatever they were and gathered around Dilan.

All of them greeted Dilan, which made him feel quite awkward.

He nodded in return, but that was already everything and he didn't say anything further.

The others had not expected him to suddenly start speaking to them either. Hence, they felt good to see that he hadn't changed much.

Giving some space for everyone to see what was going on, they formed a big circle as Oliver placed the three ability crystals in the center.

Nobody was pouncing at the crystals, even though some looked at them with a faint shimmer in their eyes.

However, none of them was greedy enough to take all of them.

After all, this would mean that they had to fight more often, in order to make good use of their abilities.

"Can someone hand me the crystals? I want to see what kind of abilities they're and if one of them is useful for me!"

Dilan would have moved by himself, but he wanted to heal as quickly as possible. Thus he tried to move as less as possible and not let the wound tear open.

Oliver, who was just about to sit, jumped up, but Ailee leaned forward to pick up the three ability crystals.

She was seated near Dilan and handed him the crystals without hesitation.

With a nod, he thanked her before averting his focus on the grayish crystals.

[Arts of Cooking(Passive)] Ungraded ★★★★★

-Provides knowledge about various delicious dishes. Some may even reward special gifts or additional points to the Log of the Ancient!-

[Basic Archer Mastery(Passive)] Tier-0 ★★

-The memories of the teaching, and experience of an Archer will be imprinted in the Host's mind!-

[Violent Strike(Active)] Tier-0 ★

-1 Unit of mana will be used to issue a powerful strike. Enhances strength property by <0.5> until the strike has been issued!-

"Recipes that boost our stats? Doesn't that mean they use ingredients filled with Essence?" Dilan mumbled wondering if one had to use specific Essence crystals to make the food, or if it was just the meat of certain beasts.

They had yet to test cooking the meat of mutated animals, but Dilan was pretty sure that it was edible. Not the flesh of zombies, and probably not the rats either, but the python from days before might have been edible.

Continuing to read, Dilan thought about it for a few seconds before he returned the ability crystals to Ailee.

“I don’t need any of these abilities. You guys can decide on your own.”

Dilan knew that the memories of an Archer might help him to gain more combat experience. It might even help him to improve his accuracy with the spear.

But thinking about it on a long-term basis, he felt that it would be a waste to learn the passive master ability of a weapon he wouldn’t want to wield.

His Origin ability [Regeneration] and his passive [Lesser Immunity] clearly hinted that he should fight in the front, which was exactly what he planned to do.

As such, the [Basic Archer Mastery] ability would just waste one of his four remaining passive ability slots.

Not knowing whether the number of abilities could increase in the future, Dilan felt that the Archery mastery ability would be a waste.

He felt exactly the same about the Violent Strike ability.

Dilan had no intention to learn to replace one of his two empty active ability slots for an ability such as [Violent Strike].

It might be a decent ability, and it would only grow stronger over time, but Dilan felt no desire to learn the ability because its basic enhancements were simply not worth it in his opinion!

His decision astonished the others.

But after seeing everybody’s expression, Dilan felt the need to explain his reasoning.

“Please only choose the cooking ability if you are ready to cook all the time. These special rewards could save our lives in the future, so don’t waste your ability and try to improve it.

As for the archery ability, please don’t change your weapon of choice later, and take a bow, or crossbow once we get our hands on one.

Meanwhile, please keep in mind that we have only two active skill slots.

I think it would be really suited to initiate one-hit kills against powerful opponents if used properly. Its use can be altered and is compatible with many different fighting styles.”

Dilan was not even sure if the others were able to understand him. As such he decided to keep it at that.

There was far more he wanted to say about the abilities, and how they should be distributed.

But at the end of the day, it was not his decision to choose them for others.

Thus, he quieted down and observed how the others went ahead with the distribution.

What he didn’t know was that everyone had subconsciously listened to and thought hard about Dilan’s words.

Their knowledge about the Primordial Ascension, and everything revolving around it was limited.

However, Dilan had taught them a lot in these past few days, including the information Jack had told them on the day of Dilan's arrival.

Because of his honest words, the Survivors showed their interest only in the abilities they truly wanted.

If the ability held no value for them, they didn't show interest in procuring it just for the sake of having more than the others. Jack had been a good example of what greed could turn them into.

It was quite important and a big step in the right direction, which was something that made Dilan feel quite satisfied.

'This group is far more disciplined and humane than I expected it to be!'

Chapter 27 Healed

Astonishing enough, it was Bianne who got her hands on the [Arts of Cooking] ability crystal.

Apparently, she was the one to have cooked the beef stew and it tasted good.

Only Dilan didn't know that she could cook, which was quite helpful to fill the gaps of experience and certain cooking tips and tricks which the passive ability didn't teach her.

The [Basic Archer Mastery] ability was something most Survivors wanted.

It taught a lot of useful stuff, and by allowing one to fight at a long-range, one could actively gain Essences, status points, and possibly more abilities without being too close to danger.

However, in the end, it was Ailee, who was able to get her hands on the ability.

After giving it some thought, most survivors accepted that they were not eager to face life-threatening dangers on a daily basis.

And these dangers were greater if one included the fact that one was quite far away from others while using long-range weapons.

Thus, Ailee got the ability that she immediately bound to her.

Contrary to Dilan's earlier belief, only Oliver was the taker of the active ability [Violent Strike] and none of the other survivors wanted it.

Or, if he were to put it in better words, nobody wanted the ability because Oliver showed his interest in the ability..

Nobody wanted to fight in the front row as much as Oliver and Dilan.

That was why the other Survivors had decided to give both the chance to choose what kind of abilities they wanted, first.

With that in mind, Oliver received his first active ability!

'The ability will have a decent use for Oliver, once he becomes even stronger.' Dilan predicted while gauging how it would be for Oliver, who focused on Agility to use the violent strike.

An increase of 0.5 Strength was worth the status points of only one level, or the Essence crystal of two, or three monsters.

However, this was currently more than enough because they were unable to procure the Essence crystals of hundreds of different monsters.

Taking this into consideration before adding the fact that there were quite a few complications in the zombie hunt according to Oliver, Dilan modified his plan.

“Ailee, tomorrow afternoon I need the Reinforced Stone Spear back!” Dilan suddenly said, attracting everyone’s attention.

The two old nurses looked at him as if he was insane because he needed some good rest to let himself heal.

But seeing Dilan’s serious expression, and the determination in his voice, they were not able to say anything.

It would be wasted on him, either way.

As such, they just shook their head, while Ailee could only nod.

‘Will he really be healed in 24 hours?’

Everyone had the same question in mind, but nobody asked him out loud.

He looked confident to recover in a mere span of 24 hours.

Thus, the survivors stood up before they returned to their previous tasks.

The groups from before changed, as some switched from going out to hunt to completing necessary chores.

Meanwhile, Dilan was left alone, providing him with the necessary time to think and figure out what they were supposed to do next.

‘The Gate probably allows a batch of monsters to emerge every x amount of time. A few circles of spawnings should have passed by now...’

Dilan figured that the more he rested the bigger the number of Horned Rats and Grendels coming through the gate would become.

And this was without the possibility of even higher ranked monsters, such as existences like the Goblin Warrior, whom Dilan had seen emerging from the temporary Gate in the forest, step in through the gate in the hospital.

While he was thinking hard about the best possible plan, minutes turned into hours that passed slowly. On the brighter side, he recuperated faster as the effect of the [Regeneration] ability seemed to work much better with more nutrition.

Thus, he had a few more plates of the beef stew, before he got up from the ground after only 12 hours passed.

He knew that he couldn't fight properly yet, but he had to visit the loo.

After a total of 24 hours passed, everyone stared at Dilan, who was stretching his body as if he had never been shot.

When he removed the bandages in order to replace them with fresh ones, one could clearly see that the bullet hole was mostly healed and that only a little bit of flesh and skin was missing for him to be fully recovered.

It was not noteworthy, and once he was bandaged again, Dilan smiled lightly at Ailee before reaching out with his hand.

She let out a short sigh and handed over the Reinforced Stone Spear.

Grasping two rat horn daggers, she decided to use them for the next hunt.

Right now, it was the 5th day since the Primordial Ascension had been initiated.

The generators were still working, and so was the water supply.

Food and water were no issue for the time being.

It were the humans and monsters that caused far too much trouble, instead!

"Let's go." Dilan thus said before he opened the cafeteria's doors with a faint smile on his face as he thought,

'I can rest once I'm dead!'

Taking this motto to his heart, Dilan pushed his feet off the ground to catapult himself ahead the moment he saw the first group of zombies.

Making use of his agility of more than twice the human average, he appeared in front of the zombies before thrusting the spear out.

With the first zombie killed easily, Dilan retracted the spear before piercing it out once again.

A moment later he repeated the same step again but noticed that the next zombie was slightly faster than the rest.

Taking a step back to avoid entering the zombie's range, Dilan quickly retreated before he slashed horizontally, slicing off the upper part of the zombie's head.

Understanding the trouble Oliver had mentioned a day before, he decided to be more careful.

But instead of acting too vigilant, his thrusts and slashes with the Reinforced Stone Spear became faster and more powerful with each attack.

He had missed fighting for two days in total.

Because he was rendered incapable of fighting for around 48 hours, the excitement that streamed through him at this moment allowed him to give his all.

In less than three minutes an entire group of more than 20 zombies died, and he managed to clear the hallway between the cafeteria and the entrance hall without any issues.

“Yep, he is definitely not injured anymore...” Oliver commented as a slight trace of joy, and a competitive spirit emerged within him.

The fear of being killed was still present within him. However, killing zombies was something as normal as waking up in the morning.

It was just natural to him now.

But that was mostly owed to his passive [Basic Dagger Mastery] ability as it provided vast information about daggers and the memories of amateur assassins.

Dilan had not received any information about how to wield specific weapons, what movements were powerful, or gaining real-life combat experience by binding an ability to himself.

Instead, he was just excited to fight because it made him feel alive, which was similar to pain.

The pain made him understand that his body was still alive while slaughtering his opponents made him feel euphoric as adrenaline coursed through his veins.

And excitement was something Dilan was bound to feel surging through his entire body for the following hours because many things were bound to change.

Chapter 28 Giant Zombie

In less than half an hour, their group of five people, consisting of Dilan, Oliver, Ailee, Sarah, and a young man, called Pierre cleared the entrance hall and the large hall on the second floor.

It was Pierre’s first hunt, but he did quite well because the ability he received by killing his first zombie was called [Calm Mind].

The skill’s name was self-explanatory, so there was no need for anyone to ask about the ways to employ the passive ability in their group’s teamwork.

After half an hour of hunting relentlessly, Ailee, Sarah and Pierre were exhausted.

Fortunately, their rewards were as great as their exhaustion.

Pierre reached level 1, and he was not far from leveling up.

Meanwhile, both Sarah and Ailee reached level two, with Ailee being close to leveling up as well.

On the other hand, Oliver was level 3, and Dilan was level 4.

If they were to solely compare their status points, Dilan had the most.

But he was pretty sure that Oliver had an advantage in terms of pure combat prowess if he were to properly use the provided memories in connection to the [Violent strike] ability.

It was not important for the given situation, and only something great to know.

Meanwhile, Dilan and Oliver took a look at the front corridor without hesitation upon reaching the second floor.

They ignored the sounds coming from the left and right corridor as they walked through the front corridor..

Looking through each room with their weapons held in front of their bodies, they figured that there were far fewer zombies than initially expected.

Only a few could be spotted every now and then.

As such, the two grew more vigilant as they kept advancing further.

Because both knew that some corridors were interconnected with each to allow hospital staff to reach every place without any delay, it was difficult to tell if some monsters of the left corridors had reached the front corridor.

Thinking about it, Dilan felt that it was unlikely because there were not even dead bodies or broken limbs of zombies around them.

However, the moment they reached the middle part of the corridor, they finally figured out why so many zombies were missing.

“Fuck it!” Oliver blurted out instinctively, as he looked at the three-meter tall zombie that was just devouring one of its own kind.

With its height of three meters, the zombie’s head hit the lightbulbs in the ceiling, while its width was around 1.5 meters.

It could fit through the corridors but didn’t move much as it could reach one of the many zombie corpses quite easily.

They were stacked in a neat manner as if someone had folded and organized clothes, and when a corpse fell to the ground, the tall beast picked it up before neatly placing it on top once again.

Looking at the Giant-like Zombie, even Dilan’s mind went blank for a second and he had to rub his eyes to ensure that he wasn’t hallucinating.

Unfazed by the sight of the humans, the Zombie kept munching on the corpses.

It didn’t even move its short legs, which were partially covered by a round, huge belly, and a single inch

Oliver took a look at his dagger before staring at the huge belly of the beast, just to smile dryly as he took a step back.

“It’s above level 5, right?” He asked but Dilan simply shrugged his shoulders.

He had no idea what level the zombie was, but it was certainly something stronger than the Krendel.

That was something Dilan was sure of.

With that thought in mind, Dilan went ahead, entering the small area in the corridor that was slightly broader.

On the right side were the doors that led to the nurses' room.

Out of the corner of his eye, he could even see outlines of two or three nurses.

But instead of paying any more attention to the nurses' room, Dilan thrust the Reinforced Stone Spear straight into the zombie's belly.

The tall zombie retaliated by waving its large hand towards him but even before it could reach him, he disappeared from his earlier location.

Missing him, its flat hand smashed on the ground, and before it could strike again, Dilan slashed out.

A faint smile appeared on his lips as he knew that the strike of his blade was lethal. After all, he had used some of his mana to coat the Reinforced Stone Spear's blade.

When the others thought that Dilan had been fully focused on resting during the last 24 hours, he had actually attempted to actively sense mana.

It was certainly not easy.

Sensing the unknown mythical energy made him feel uncomfortable.

Mana was not something that should exist on Milarn, let alone within humans.

But after spending almost an entire day, excluding a few hours of sleep on sensing mana, it was something he could grasp.

The mana within his body was easier to sense, which was why he focused on it.

Instead of staying idle while resting, he had tried his best to perceive what using up mana and replenishing it meant and how to do it efficiently, he made use of the Origin ability as it required mana to be used.

It was automatically drained from his body to empower [Regeneration], which was something that seemed to be connected to his Essence crystal.

This made it clear that the Essence crystal was the place all his abilities were bound to.

Dilan also understood that mana circulated throughout the body, and not his very own Essence crystal.

Thus, he tested out his first attempt to empower his attack with a little bit of mana.

While his first attack failed to pierce through the hide of the tall zombie, which was thick enough to resist the tip of the spear, the second attack was a success.

A bright smile appeared on Dilan's face as his attack sliced through the zombie's entire hand, including the bone, Dilan smiled brightly.

Retreating just a moment later, he reemerged next to Oliver, who looked at him with squinted eyes.

"We can pierce through it's flesh with enough force! Just use your [Violent Strike] when attacking!"

Oliver just nodded his head, unsure of what the faint shimmering glint around the blade of the Reinforced Stone Spear was.

He had barely perceived it, but it was certainly there.

It was his misfortune that there was no time to interrogate Dilan as the tall zombie began to move.

Despite its huge size, the zombie's speed was not even twice as fast as the average human.

This made it quite easy for them to retreat.

However, the moment it entered the narrow parts of the corridor, both Dilan and Oliver figured that they would soon enter close combat.

Taking a look towards his right and left, Dilan thought quickly before he came up with a new idea to injure the tall zombie.

"Room to your right!" He could barely warn Oliver before he had to retreat once again.

Using the stump of an arm that was missing a hand like a baseball bat, the zombie swung it around, preventing Dilan from approaching itself.

As such, it was only great that Oliver figured out what Dila wanted from him.

While Dilan attracted the tall zombie's attention, Oliver jumped in the room to his right.

Several seconds passed in which Dilan continued to lure the tall zombie towards the large hall on the second floor.

Meanwhile, Ailee, Pier, and Sarah looked at Dilan as if he was insane.

Their expressions were screaming, 'Why the hell are you bringing such a thing towards us?'

But Dilan and Oliver had already thought of a plan.

There had been no need for them to speak a lot with each other and just a few signals and gestures had been enough for them to create it.

As such, Dilan was currently just waiting for Oliver to backstab the tall zombie by making use of his dagger.

However, what he didn't expect to see was that Oliver's force after he activated [Violent Strike] was still too low to pierce through the zombie's skull.

What was even worse was that a crack spread through the dagger's blade when the dealt attack was barely strong enough to crack open a few centimeters of the zombie's head!

Though the blade had managed to land a severe blow, the Reinforced Stone Dagger was stuck in the head of the zombie. Oliver watched in horror as it turned around, and Oliver smelled its foul breath that nearly made him gag as it issued a deep growl.

"Fuck!"

Chapter 29 Bronze

While Oliver cursed out, he let go of the Reinforced Stone Dagger.

If he wouldn't done that, his body might have either been mashed into a pulp or smashed into the wall next to them.

The tall zombie thrashed around violently, using its other hand to attempt to grasp Oliver.

However, thanks to Oliver using his level-up status points mostly to improve his agility stat, he could evade the zombie's attack rather easily.

Having angered the tall zombie, its full attention was on Oliver.

This gave Dilan the required opportunity to push himself beyond his limits as he catapulted himself towards the zombie before jumping behind its head that was turned towards him.

Using all the energy he could muster, Dilan thrust his spear upon reaching the highest momentum, a faint shimmer shrouded the Reinforced Stone Spear's blade.

Just a moment later, Dilan's attack reached the designated target, piercing through both the damaged Reinforced Stone Dagger and the cracked skull of the tall zombie.

'Sorry about the dagger,' Dilan could only apologize in his head as a bright smile emerged on his face.

Clearly sensing how the tip of his spear pierced through the skull, reaching the softer muscles of its brain, he couldn't help himself anymore as he tried to push his spear further deep into its head..

However, this was not even necessary as the tall zombie let out a weird groan before it fell to the ground.

While collapsing face down, it nearly squashed Oliver, who had to jump back to save himself.

Several seconds later, the tall zombie was still writhing on the floor, thrashing its arms and legs as if it would jump up any second and eat both Dilan and Oliver.

Yet, when Dilan jumped on its back without any hesitation to pierce the Reinforced Stone Spear in the back of its head once again, the zombie slowly stopped moving around.

With a sigh of relief, Dilan looked at the empty corridor, his eyes landing on the small and perfectly stacked pile of zombie corpses.

There were no walking undeads left, which gave him the opportunity to look at the tall zombie.

"My...dagger..." Oliver just mumbled with a frown, while holding the hilt of the Reinforced Stone Dagger that now had half of its blade broken off.

This caused Dilan to smile wryly but there was nothing he could do to restore it. He understood the value of the Reinforced Stone Dagger well.

But there had been no way for him to pierce through the hard skull of the high-leveled zombie if it were not for Oliver's preparational work.

As such, it was sad to lose such a good weapon, and now they were only left with the makeshift daggers crafted from the horns of a horned rat.

With that in mind, Dilan's smile disappeared as he turned serious before he widened the gap in the zombie's skull.

Not long after he found the Essence crystal which he took out.

Bronze colored Essence swirled through the Essence crystal making Dilan stare at it in astonishment.

'Huh? A colored Essence crystal?'

The crystal he held in his hand was certainly not an ability. As such, there had to be a reason for the Essence crystal to have a bronze color.

Unfortunately, he was unable to ponder over it for long as he heard several footsteps from further ahead of them.

Immediately he readied himself to fight and changed his stance, but instead of zombies, he found himself facing the three nurses, whose outlines he had seen earlier.

He calmed down a little but didn't even think of lowering his guard.

The nurses took a few breaths when they arrived in front of them. Their faces looked exhausted and he could see bags under their eyes, while their movements were sluggish as well.

They hadn't slept more than four hours during the last five days, but none of that mattered right now.

Finally, someone had come to their rescue, and they were strong enough to defeat the gigantic zombie.

"Thanks for rescuing us, we thought that we were going to die in there!!" The youngest nurse spoke in a relieved voice and her eyes that shone with tears now held a glimmer of hope.

Her eyes were fixated on Dilan.

She saw him fighting against the tall zombie, right from 'heroically' cutting off the monster's arm to the final attack.

"Well, no problem. We just wanted to clear the corridor. But it's great that there were more survivors..." Dilan simply said, not further bothering about the young nurse's behavior.

His focus was on the small stack of zombie corpses further behind the nurses.

He pointed at them, while turning his head towards the remaining three members of their group.

"Ailee, Pierre, use the Essence crystals of the zombie corpses next to the nurse's room to level up! If there are some Essence crystals left afterward, take them back to the others."

After giving out instructions, his attention turned back to the Bronze colored Essence crystal.

'Why a different color? The zombie was definitely still Tierless, so why does it have a different color? Does it have a higher potency or some other use than to absorb it?'

His mind was rattling, and he tried to figure out if it was the most efficient for him to just absorb the Essence crystal, or if he should do something else with it.

"Just take it!" Oliver said while shrugging his shoulders.

He was still sad about the loss of his weapon.

But at the same time, he could tell that Dilan had to sacrifice the dagger to kill the unique zombie.

“If there is a special effect, you should rather absorb the Essence crystal to test out how valuable it is.

That is better than thinking about giving it to Bianne. She can experiment with other Essence crystals.”

Dilan came to the same conclusion. Thus he absorbed the Essence crystal after Oliver told him to do so.

It didn't look like Oliver wanted the Essence crystal either way.

[<Bronze> Essence of a Tierless Level 5 Gluttonous Zombie has been absorbed→ +0.8 Strength, +0.6 Health, +0.5 Mana]

[Essence pool has been filled. Host reached level 5! +0.5 Status points can be allocated!]

‘I definitely got more Essence from it than I expected...but other than that, a level 5 monster should provide fewer stat points, or am I wrong?’

Dilan guessed that he was able to level up and that he received so many status points because the absorbed essence was ‘Bronze.’

This was something Dilan presumed to be the reason for the Gluttonous zombie to be so powerful.

The theory he had in mind was something that excited him.

It not only told him that special types of monsters existed but also that they could not be included in his theory about the status points he could receive from one kind of monster!

Chapter 30 More?

Dilan was unwilling to return to the cafeteria after receiving so many status points and enough essence to level up.

Taking a look at Oliver, Dilan saw that he still seemed to be a little bit depressed about his loss of the Reinforced Stone Dagger.

Nevertheless, he was tightly gripping the rat horn daggers.

‘How about we let him go all out? There shouldn't be any more of these Bronze monsters ahead, otherwise, they would have eaten each other, I guess.’

With a faint smile on his lips, he looked at the three nurses and Sarah.

“Sarah, can you lead them back? Oliver and I will continue to clear the front corridor.”

A single look at Dilan was enough to tell them that he was just too excited to go back to the cafeteria and start fighting.

It was not just him but Sarah was unwilling to return as well.

She had yet to reach Level 3, and there were monsters on the left corridor that she could kill to level up.

Her information about these monsters was not a lot, but they would provide lots of essence and status points.

That was what mattered to her for now. .

Because of that, Sarah looked reluctantly at Dilan as she tried to gain some leverage.

“But can’t they just kill one zombie right now, when they’re already here?”

In the meantime, we can hunt together as well!”

Sarah tried her best to convince Dilan and Oliver, but it was entirely useless as the youngest of the three nurses exclaimed in shock,

“K-Kill what!? Nooo...please don’t let any of these grotesque monsters even near us....”

After hearing her anxious voice, Dilan’s eyes flicked to the young nurse for the first time.

She was younger than expected, had a small build, short brown hair and there were tiny freckles on her cheeks.

Based on her looks, she had finished school not too long ago.

As such, he didn’t really expect anything grand from her.

But even the two other nurses were shocked when Sarah suggested that they should hunt, at least, one monster.

Dilan just looked at them with a shaking head and a glint of coldness in his eyes.

Only a moment later, he sighed deeply.

“First lead them away. I believe they will understand the situation later. “

Sarah frowned deeply after listening to Dilan’s voice.

But she didn’t dare to counter him, and just nodded her head.

Ailee and Pierre would also return to the cafeteria upon completing their task, and Sarah had to acknowledge that she wouldn’t be able to fight for long as well.

The earlier fights against the ordinary zombies had already been exhausting, both mentally and physically.

Even if she didn’t like that Dilan wanted her to leave, Sarah nodded her head.

“Alright, I will take them back. If there are some spare things that you come across, please leave some for me, hehe.”

Trying to hide her slight trace of frustration, Sarah tried to laugh her bad mood off, and simultaneously requested some loot from Dilan as well.

Dilan didn’t bother to try searching for the hidden meaning behind her words.

The Essence crystals of Level 0 zombies were of no use for him, and he would require more than 2000, just to level up once.

And after he leveled up, the number would increase exponentially.

Meanwhile, for unleveld Survivors or Ascenders of a lower level, the Essences he didn't require could be considered quite useful.

After he believed that he had answered Sarah in a satisfactory manner he turned around.

Pierre and Ailee worked quickly on the zombie corpses while Sarah led the three nurses to the cafeteria.

Sooner or later they would understand just how much the world had changed so there was no need of forcing them to do things.

Thus Dilan was not worried and walked past Oliver, while tightly holding his Reinforced Stone Spear.

"Let's go."

Even if Oliver didn't actively express his desire to continue fighting, this was not necessary. The two were a pair now- a team of fighters and Oliver would simply tail Dilan on most occasions.

It was not surprising to see him follow Dilan as they entered the front corridor.

"I leveled up!" Pierre suddenly exclaimed with a slight trace of joy, and he gave a bright smile to Dilan, who stepped in.

Dilan was the youngest amongst the survivor, excluding the young nurse, who would join the group of survivors.

But even then, his attitude and demeanor made others believe that he was more mature and reliable than others in the current times.

Nodding at Pierre, Dilan looked ahead a moment later before his eyes gleamed.

'Maybe I was wrong? Are there more strong ones?'

He could hear a deep growling from the intersection ahead, giving him hope that he could find zombies a bit further.

Accelerating his pace, he rushed ahead, passing by the closed rooms they had yet to look through as he emerged in the T-intersection.

With a quick glance thrown towards his right and left side, Dilan assessed the situation in both directions and saw rotten flesh, intestines, and bones lying around everywhere.

This was already odd but not everything he noticed.

'The horned rats are on the left,' he quickly concluded and realized that there might truly be some shortcuts or other paths between the left and front corridor.

Meanwhile, the right side showed them a similar scene when they had first spotted the front corridor and the Gluttonous zombie. Like that corridor, even this one had no zombies.

“Is there one more of those tall zombies? Why are they suddenly starting to eat each other?”

Dilan was not sure about the answer to Oliver’s question.

Thus, he shrugged his shoulders and came up with a possible explanation.

“Maybe there are similar types of zombies, or some zombies figured that devouring their own kind will benefit them as well. Essence crystals should be useful for all types of living beings.”

If the zombies ate the rats, they would be able to level up quite quickly as well.

Meanwhile, a similar scenario would occur if it were to be the other way around.

That was also why Dilan got more vigilant when he found stains of blood on the left side.

There were also some on the right side, but they were relatively fewer.

“Where should we go first?” Oliver suddenly asked, while tightening his grip on the rat horn daggers in his hand.

They were certainly not sharp, let alone durable enough to pierce through the skull of a level 5 monster.

As such, he was slightly nervous about his next fight, but before he could worry further, the growls of several zombies to his right reached him.

“There is your answer.”