

Warlord 41

Chapter 41 Life-and-Death

Dilan's body might be a wreck, but his legs were still unscathed.

Because of that, he forced the rest of his body to work.

His left hand grasped a mashed body of a rat lying on the ground, which he threw towards the face of the Krendel.

Dilan was unable to see properly, but he could roughly gauge the location of its face.

Thus, the moment he heard a 'thwack' indicating that he had hit his target could be heard, he shot up from the ground.

The bleeding on both of his upper arms had worsened, and severe dizziness overcame him, but all of this was not important as he forced himself ahead.

He could not afford to die right now.

Yet, attacking the Krendel was not possible either because he was currently at a great disadvantage.

The only attack he could issue would be to jump towards the remains of the Stone Spear that was stuck in the huge Krendel's head.

Faintly grasping his weapon, Dilan used the remaining effect of the [Thunder Step] ability to shoot towards the T-intersection that led to the left corridor.

To his right, he could still see the blueish gleaming Gate, while the hall to the second floor could be seen to his left.

Dilan didn't even notice that the door that separated the second floor's hall and the left corridor had been opened, nor did he see that a small figure was now standing in the doorway..

The small figure was not even 1.7 meters tall and smiled ominously the moment Dilan's eyes fell on it.

Tiny electricity currents enveloped Dilan's feet that were smeared with dried blood, just for him to take deep breaths when he noticed that the boost of his Agility disappeared.

The [Thunder Step] ability's effect had worn off, and Dilan almost instantaneously noticed that his body was about to collapse.

Blood trickled down his face and arms.

He had lost an unimaginable amount of blood already but still managed to stand on his feet, ready to face the monster ahead.

His eyes were ice-cold, and without a single trace of fear.

With his unwavering eyes focused on the blurry figure of the huge Krendel, Dilan prepared himself to attack in a suicidal manner.

'What will you do now?' The little figure thought to herself seeing that Dilan was preparing himself to do something.

Based on his severe injuries, he should have collapsed long since. In fact, he should not even be fit enough to stand let alone fight and might have already died, if he were to be an ordinary human from before the Primordial Ascension.

But too many things had changed, including the endurance of the human body.

However, even then, his injuries were a huge hindrance and prevented him from being able to move properly.

As such, it was merely Dilan's willpower and determination to survive that allowed him to stand on the ground.

His stamina was fully drained, and so was his Mana, while his Health stat hit a dangerously low level.

Gritting his teeth, he saw that the huge Krendel slashed out with its right claw and was ready to tear Dilan apart.

Barely lowering his body, Dilan decided to risk it and be a little reckless, which led him to take a step ahead.

This allowed him to evade the slash by a hair's breadth.

But what he didn't expect to happen was that it would be impossible for him to make use of his higher Agility.

He wanted to take one last jump towards the head of the huge Krendel in order to push the remains of the Reinforced Stone Spear in its head, and kill it for good.

In fact, Dilan had no idea how it was still alive despite the Stone Spear that was still lodged in its head.

This made no sense, and the only thing he could bet on was that he must have missed the monster's brain by a mere centimeter!

Unfortunately, Dilan was not able to jump toward the huge Krendel's head as he could barely move his body when suddenly the left arm of the Krendel lunged out at him.

It reached him in an instant, and a straight punch with a tightly clenched fist hit him in the center of his abdomen.

The might of a being with a Strength that was higher than six times the average human strength before the Primordial Ascension impacted on him.

This took away his breath and it felt like his internal organs were being torn apart.

The huge Krendel had learned from its earlier mistake, and instinctively punched Dilan with its left fist instead of risking injuring itself again!

When it was smashed into the wall, the concrete cracked under its weight. Small bits of brick and stones fell to the ground, followed by Dilan whose body slumped to the ground, and he stayed there, unmoving.

Several bones in his body cracked and blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth, and his eyes felt heavy.

Even if he wanted to, there was nothing he could do against the huge Krendel, whose biggest advantage had been its overly powerful and rock-solid defense.

If the Reinforced Stone Spear would have been strong enough to pierce through its hide, the fight would have ended with an easy victory on his side.

But he didn't have a stronger weapon and did everything he could using some technique, his weak weapon and brute force.

Forcing his body to exceed its limitation once again, Dilan lifted his hand the moment the huge Krendel slashed at him, mercilessly.

It was his last effort to block the attack and survive.

Yet, Dilan was fully aware that it was an entirely useless move.

With his eyes forced open, Dilan continued to face his opponent until the last moment.

Dilan was not giving up, and would continue to fight, and it was just his body that couldn't go anymore.

However, just when he expected that everything was over for him, a bolt of lightning flashed through the left corridor.

Dilan had only been able to see a purple flash, followed by the sound of something being hit by high voltage, and then everything went silent.

It was eerie, unexpected, and Dilan's breath hitched in his throat.

The Krendel's movement stopped abruptly as well, and its eyes widened as the huge monster collapsed right next to him, its head blasting in the wall.

It had been killed on the spot, and the bolt of lightning pierced through its head, penetrating it easily.

In the blink of an eye, the huge Krendel was dead!

Everything Dilan had been incapable of was easily solved by someone he was not even able to see.

Forcing himself to turn towards the right side, Dilan could barely open his blood-smeared mouth as he forced himself to speak,

"Who..are you?"

He was unable to see anything other than the blurry outlines of a human. But this human being didn't seem to be interested in small talk.

“Someone, who is not really interested in you anymore. See you later, I guess. Don’t die until then, it would be a waste!”

The voice of a young, unfamiliar woman rang through his ears.

Just a moment later, his unknown savior decided to leave as she turned around and trotted her way towards the hospital’s third floor.

She didn’t care about the Survivors in the hospital, and had entered it just for one purpose!

Saving Dilan was something she did on a whim.

His desire to stay alive, to keep fighting, to end the life of the monster that was evidently more powerful, even if it was just because of the difference in their means to attack and defend, had made her want to help him.

But that was the only attention she gave him and left Dilan all by himself, who was surrounded by hundreds of corpses, including the corpse of the huge Krendel!

This was the one and only present she provided to Dilan, for his inhuman-like efforts to end the life of the huge Krendel and save himself.

In her opinion, he deserved to survive as he kept on fighting till his presumed last breath and didn’t allow all of his struggle to wear him down.

She only hoped that she hadn’t somehow given a psychopath a second chance to live, to become stronger, and to start a massacre in a world where only the strong ruled.

And it were the strong who decided over life-and-death of weaklings!

Chapter 42 Pain makes you stronger!

Dilan was unable to move, and his vision blurred even further over time.

The pain that spread through him was unbearable, but he didn’t even have the energy to groan, or grimace.

If Dilan didn’t know better, he would think that he was about to die.

But he did know that he wasn’t fatally injured and it was just the concussion, his broken bones, and the blood loss that made it seem as if he was going to die, nothing else.

That was, at least, how he thought about the situation.

He didn’t realize it at first, but after witnessing the huge Krendel’s death, Dilan’s mind was eerily calm, and his body relaxed.

Dilan simply accepted everything that happened around him.

Leaning against the broken wall, Dilan tried to find the most comfortable position to rest a little as his body didn’t allow him to move properly.

He wouldn’t be able to stand up for quite a while either.

'Heavily injured again...pain seems to have become my permanent partner, I guess?'

Dilan joked with himself, clearly knowing that he had only survived due to the help of the unknown woman.

He was thankful for her help, but it would be quite ridiculous if he were to die due to the attack of a horned rat or one of the smaller Krendels now.

A humorless chuckle escaped his dry lips but that only made him wince in pain.

All of a sudden, without any warning, several notifications popped up in front of his eyes, astonishing him.

He saw the azure-colored screens, but couldn't read them because his vision was still blurred.

Just when he thought about this, the somewhat familiar robotic voice resounded in his head..

[Host survived 3 deadly injuries! Requirement to upgrade Origin ability [Regeneration] has been met!]

[[Regeneration]- Tier-0 ★

1) Survive <3> Deadly injuries has been attained!

2) Health of <5> units has been reached!

Upgrade to Tier-0 ★★]

Dilan didn't even know that he could already take a look at the upgrade requirements for his Origin ability.

He was also not aware that he had already survived the third deadly injury because to him it felt like he was still enduring its aftermath.

But from the looks of it, the Log of the Ancient was certain that he would survive it.

'At least there is one thing we have in common. We both know how resilient I am...' He just thought before sensing a fresh wave of energy flowing through his body.

This led him to think about the changes of the [Regeneration] ability.

[[Regeneration]- Tier-0 ★★

[+5 Health], Passive →Enhances regeneration,

Active →Uses up 1 unit of Mana to further enhance the regeneration effect for 10 seconds!]

The only factor that changed about his ability was that he received three additional points in his Health stat.

That was a huge boost, and it allowed him to recuperate much more quickly.

Nevertheless, Dilan could only force a smile on his lips as the requirements to upgrade the ability were...harsh, to put it simply.

'If I need to endure being injured lethally in order to upgrade my Origin ability, it really looks like pain will accompany me forever!'

It was only logical for him to feel the need to enhance his Health stat. After all, the higher his Health, the stronger his body, and the faster he could recuperate from injuries.

Thus, if it was possible for him to upgrade his Origin ability, he wouldn't have to actively use status points for his Health stat.

There should be many other benefits as well, which made him feel conflicted as he would have to encounter deadly injuries and go through near-death experiences just to upgrade the ability!

Just a moment later another notification was unveiled by the robotic voice.

[-[Lesser Immunity] Ungraded ★★★★★-]

1) Essence of '60' infected monsters has been absorbed

2) Health property of -6- points has been reached

Upgrade to Ungraded ★★★★★]

His passive ability received an upgrade as well. This was pretty nice, but it didn't provide him any additional stats.

As such, he simply appreciated the upgrade, while trying to avert his focus to collect mana from his surroundings.

The enhanced Health stat and the passive effect of his [Regeneration] ability were working wonders, slowly healing his body.

But Dilan wanted to enhance this effect by using mana to activate his Origin ability.

It was impossible for him to know when a new batch of monsters would emerge from the Gate that was less than 100 meters to his left.

Thus, while enduring the pain that made him feel as if he was being torn apart over and over again, he gathered the surrounding mana.

It was more difficult than before owing to the distraction of pain, but Dilan was slowly getting the hang of mana.

Using the [Regeneration] ability every half an hour, several hours flew by until it took him only 25 minutes to replenish a single unit of mana.

Around five hours had passed, and he was able to activate [Regeneration] a total of 12 times.

Adding his natural healing capacities to it, Dilan's head had mostly recuperated, while the worst injuries were tended to.

Dilan stopped bleeding quite a while ago, and some of his bones had already mended and healed themselves, while those that had dislocated were now affixed to their prior position as well.

But none of that really decreased the pain he was feeling.

His entire body was still a wreck as he could feel the pain shooting up through numerous joints, bones and muscles that were slowly being repaired and healed.

This feeling was just weird and made him uncomfortable.

Unfortunately, the pain didn't help him a lot because he had no time to waste.

On the brighter side, both his Mana and Stamina were completely replenished.

He didn't use the [Regeneration] Origin ability again because it made him feel even weirder, every single time it was utilized.

Just the thought of using it caused chills to run down his spine.

'It's not a life-threatening situation right now!' He thought, telling himself that he was perfectly fine.

After all, it was only the broken bones on his back, his central knuckle on the right hand, the deep four gashes on both upper arms, and the lingering effects of the concussion that troubled him.

But, on the brighter side, he was able to see clearly, which was the biggest advantage at hand.

'There is some work for me to do, let's go!'

Telling himself that he had to collect all Essence crystals, Dilan's eyes fell on the massacre of a battlefield in front of him.

The entire hallway was littered with dead bodies, spilled guts, mashed and unrecognizable things that had once been alive, and blood...lots of blood!

Any other person would have been shocked by this sight but not Dilan.

He was quite calm as he averted his attention to the most important loot he had to get his hands on.

"Because I lost my weapon to you, little friend, I will take your Essence crystal and your claws in exchange!"

Even though he had just lost his trusted weapon, Dilan was not exactly bothered.

The claws of the huge Krendel were powerful enough to cut through a solid block of concrete.

It had been sharp enough to pierce its tough hide, which meant that it was durable and much more useful than the Reinforced Stone Spear.

But now, the problem was to separate each claw from its hand.

'Breaking them off won't work in my current strength, I'm way too weak...'

Even turning the huge Krendel on its back was not possible in his current condition.

Thus, he was not able to get hold of the Reinforced Stone Spear's blade, to test cutting off the huge Krendel's claws.

'I guess I shall lay my hands on the Essence crystal first...'

He thought as he looked at the Krendel's head.

On one side of its head, he could see a small hole with charred edges.

Meanwhile, the other side had completely burst open like a squashed watermelon. The huge Krendel's brain mass was clearly visible.

This gave Dilan a good idea of where the Essence crystal should be.

But because he couldn't find it, his attention turned in the direction of the Gate.

'If the lightning bolt had accidentally hit it, the Essence crystal must have either broken, or it was flung in this direction!'

Hoping for the latter, he moved in the direction of the Gate.

Dilan was not afraid of venturing towards it. For quite some time not a single monster had emerged from it.

This gave him enough reason to believe that some sort of limit must have been reached, or a restriction activated.

It could only be something like this, or of course, a second wave.

That was something, Dilan could imagine as well; a new wave of monsters.

Thinking about it made him feel both excited, but also that he had to be a little bit more careful.

For the time being, he should only face opponents as long as his weapons are strong enough.

Otherwise, he would end up just like a few hours ago.

But given that he would level up again, and that he was certain to get his hands on the huge Krendel's claws, the problem of owning a powerful weapon was something he was not all that worried about.

Looking around, he found the Essence crystal lying on the ground not too far away from the Gate.

Distinct Bronze swirls could be seen within the crystal, and Dilan smiled while picking it up.

While he was examining the crystal, a message popped up right in front of him.

"Huh, what is that now?"

Chapter 43 Treasures!

[<Bronze> Grade treasure can be exchanged with Bronze Essence crystal of 'Level 9 War Krendel!']

Dilan had no idea why this message suddenly popped up in front of him when he picked up the Essence crystal.

Nevertheless, it was quite interesting.

But the same could be said about the fact that the huge Krendel he fought and defeated before, was at Level 9, and known as a War Krendel.

Taking a look at the crystal once again, he was pretty sure that he would get, at the very least, a total of two whole status points by absorbing it.

But before he absorbed the Essence crystal, he retreated a few steps backward while thinking.

However, a treasure should be of more use than a few status points.

Going out to hunt various mutated animals on the mountainside, or other fantasy creatures, which he liked to call Mythical beasts, would provide him with status points, and essence as well.

A treasure could be a gamechanger.

Thus, he was fine with exchanging the Bronze Essence crystal to receive the treasure.

But it was just at this moment that the notification disappeared.

When that happened, he frowned for a second as he began to wonder if there had been a time limit.

Yet, after he took a step ahead subconsciously, the notification appeared once again.

This confused him a little bit.

For a moment he hesitated, making him step back and forward several times.

After a minute, his gaze landed on the blueish glowing Gate, a thought emerging in his mind.

“Are you the culprit?” He asked while looking at the gate, not expecting an answer..

However, when he accepted the exchange of the Essence crystal with a treasure, another notification popped up.

[Insert the Bronze Essence crystal inside the ‘Permanent Gate to the (Krendel’s Underground Valley)’!]

‘So it is like that?’

Nodding at the notification in front of him, Dilan proceeded to follow the instructions.

He threw the Essence crystal inside the Gate without giving it much thought.

A faint smile covered his eyes as he awaited the result. To distract himself he read the information of the Permanent gate.

[Permanent Gate to (Krendel’s Underground Valley). Requirements to enter the Gate are not met! -All Stats <4+>, Tierless Level [10]-!]

Both requirements were too high for the current Dilan, and he simply nodded his head in understanding.

While waiting for a few seconds to receive his treasure, Dilan secretly hoped to receive a storage ring or something similar.

It would be great to be able to carry around lots of stuff without letting others see that he carried around a lot, or what it was.

But he had not really expected it, which was why he was quite calm when a pair of gloves dropped out of the Gate.

Picking them up, he first ignored the notification that popped up in front of him as he wore them.

Dilan didn't even notice that his right hand was still aching a bit as his focus was on the brownish, scaled gloves.

If not for the scales, one could accidentally mistake them as gloves made of the finest cloth because they were simply too comfortable to wear.

His fingers and hand movements were not restricted by them, which was quite decent, and they increased his strength by quite a bit as well!

However, it was then that he sensed something at the tip of his fingers.

A moment later, the scales moved, connecting with his fingertips, which seemed to have enlarged by two or three centimeters.

'Combat gloves?' Dilan began to wonder, before averting his attention to the notification.

[[Clawed Gloves] <Bronze Treasure>

Can cut through the hide of monsters up to Tier-1 Level 0!

The Claw's sharpness and endurance can be enhanced. Uses up 0.1 Mana unit per 5 seconds!

[+1.5 Strength]

Initially, Dilan had planned to use the War Krendel's claws as his choice of weapon.

As such, when he first realized that the Clawed Gloves ought to be used for combat purposes, he was a little bit disappointed.

But this quickly subsided when he realized that the gloves were quite powerful.

'Maybe I was rewarded handsomely because I nearly lost my life fighting the War Krendel?' he wondered, just to shake his head.

Either it was his good luck that gave him the opportunity to procure such a good treasure, or it was just an ordinary drop but he wasn't sure of that!

Both were possible scenarios, but Dilan was fine with it, even if clawed gloves could be considered a pretty unique type of weapon.

Spreading his fingers wide, he slashed a few times, making his hand transform into a knife before he thrust out.

If he wanted to have the most use of this weapon, he would require more Strength and higher Agility.

Or he could just use the War Krendel's claws as well after turning them into daggers.

Nobody restricted him from owning multiple weapons.

Thus, he just nodded his head to himself before he thought about something.

'If I can get treasures at the Bronze rank by exchanging Bronze Essence crystals at the Gate, will I get Trash treasures like the Reinforced Stone Spear and Dagger by exchanging normal Essences with it?'

Excitement coursed through his body and he couldn't prevent grinning foolishly.

The more he thought about it, the more feasible it seemed.

He was not sure how the Gate exchanged the Essence crystals with treasures, but somehow it was possible.

In the end, the logic behind the Gate's exchange system didn't matter right now, either way!

Taking this into consideration, he first focused on the War Krendel's claws.

Hitting hard using the flat of his hand, he tried to break the claws clearly.

This worked okayish on the first claw.

Because it was not perfect, he used 0.1 units of Mana to enhance the Clawed gloves' sharpness for five seconds.

When he pierced out again, it worked much better.

As such, after he used up 0.2 units of Mana, all eight claws were stored in his backpack.

He entered the bloody hallways afterward and walked through them once to check if he was safe.

After reaching the end of the hallway, he passed by the last monster corpse.

Picking it up, he used his clawed gloves to open the monster corpse's skull before he pulled out the Essence crystal.

Once done, Dilan tossed the corpse behind him without another backward glance.

'If the others want their rat horns, they should come up and take them all by themselves.'

Continuing to work, an entire hour passed before he was done with the last corpse.

He was a little bit exhausted but forced himself to get up from the ground.

This allowed him to see several small mountains of 50 Essence crystals in the resting room.

It was the exact number he needed to receive a Trash grade treasure!

[<Trash> Grade treasure can be obtained in exchange for 50 Essence crystals of the same type!]

By the end of the day, he had procured a total of 245 Essence crystals.

63 of them were obtained from Krendels, while 182 were from horned rats.

Thus, he could get a total of four Trash Grade treasures, one from the Krendels' Essence crystals, and three from the horned rats!

The remaining 45 Essence crystals were not enough to boost him enough for a level up.

Dilan was fine with that as he could always receive more Essence crystals.

He was close to a level up, but chose to receive more treasures right off the bat because they might come in handy and even save his life in the near future!

Even if not all of them were useful to him, Dilan knew that Oliver and Ailee were good people.

They were ready to fight as well, which was why he was willing to gear them up with good weapons as well.

If he were to think about the others, maybe Sarah would slowly become more reasonable with her demands, and change for the better just like it had been the case with Bianne.

Dilan knew that Bianne was sorry for shooting him, and he had long since forgiven her.

The unique circumstances had made her fingers twitch and shoot him as she had been under the impression that he killed a human, instead of a recently turned zombie.

Ignoring the pain that was still bothering him, he joined his palms together as if he was scooping water before throwing an entire batch of 50 Essence crystals inside the permanent Gate.

After waiting for a few seconds, a trash grade treasure popped out, telling him that it was time to make use of the remaining 150 Essence crystals as well.

In a matter of minutes, the four piles of Essence crystals turned into treasures, which Dilan inspected with slight interest.

[Ring of Yarad]

[Tierat Dagger]

[Cold-metal Bow]

[Backpack]

The last Trash treasure astonished him a little bit because it was literally a brand-new backpack.

It had no use, at all!

This caused him to smile at the irony of the word 'trash treasure', just to ignore the descriptions of the Dagger and the Bow.

The dagger was comparably worse than the War Krendel's claws, which were slightly better than the Goblin's Reinforced Stone Weapons.

Meanwhile, the Cold-metal Bow was just that, a bow with a pulling force of over 100 lbs!

As such, only the [Ring of Yarad] was quite interesting because its use was different than one might imagine, but it was certainly useful.

In Dilan's opinion, the Ring of Yarad was far from being a trash treasure!

Chapter 44 Kathrine

[[Ring of Yarad]

Can materialize 100 liters of water every 24 hours. Requires a total of 5 Units of Mana!

[+0.1 Mana]]

With the Ring of Yarad in his possession, there was no need to fear a shortage of water, once the water supply to the hospital was cut off.

If he were to focus on creating water for the sole purpose of drinking, 50 Survivors could quench their thirst from it.

Even considering that there might be more Survivors in the future, consuming less than 2 liters a day would be fine as well.

As such, one of his biggest future worries evaporated just like that.

Wearing the Ring of Yarad, Dilan attached the bow to the new backpack before storing away the Tierat Dagger.

It provided an enhancement of 0.2 Agility, but this was useless for Dilan.

The Clawed Gloves were counted as weapons, and only the enhancement of a single weapon could be in effect at once.

There might be exceptions, but the Clawed Gloves didn't count as one!

Thus, the Tierat dagger would be handed over to Oliver to boost his stats, just to gift him one of the War Krendel's claws.

Meanwhile, Ailee with her archer mastery was bound to have good use of the Cold-metal Bow. As long as she was capable of manufacturing arrows, there would be no problem..

Dilan didn't mind the others all that much, but Ailee and Oliver could be groomed into powerful Ascenders.

But for that, he would have to become powerful and an expert first.

Clearly recalling the words of the young woman who had saved him from near death, Dilan smiled weirdly as he walked out of the left corridor.

It was already close to lunchtime, which meant that he had spent more than seven hours on the second floor.

His condition had improved a lot in the last few hours, but he was still far from having fully recuperated.

With that in mind, he ignored the uncomfortable feeling as he activated the [Regeneration] ability once again.

Afterward, he walked out of the left corridor.

Dilan was at ease, and only heard the sound of a few footsteps from the stairways that led to the third floor.

They were right next to the elevator, which Dilan had to pass to get to the stairs to return to the cafeteria.

When he turned to look to his right, his eyes fell on a young woman with a height of around 1.65 meters.

She had long black hair cascading down her back.

In the faint rays of the sun that shone through the windows of the hospital, her hair seemed to glimmer in a faint purplish touch. It was a stark contrast to her pitch-black eyes which looked like the abyss.

The moment their gazes locked, her eyes seemed to devour him.

Shivers ran down Dilan's spine, and he fumbled a bit as he smiled lightly.

He was sure that the young woman, who looked like a student in her early 20s was the same woman who had rescued him.

Because Dilan was certain of that, he was not wary of her and continued to smile.

Upon taking a proper look at her, Dilan realized that she was truly beautiful.

She was wearing casual clothes that hid her physique pretty well, but her face alone was enough to tell that she was gorgeous.

Long eyelashes highlighted her eyes, while her pretty facial features made it seem as if she walked straight out of a commercial.

But her appearance was not what Dilan paid most attention to.

He saw that the woman was exhausted, most likely drained of mana, and she had suddenly come across him which was the reason for the slight astonishment flashing through her eyes.

'How is he already able to walk?' She couldn't help but wonder.

It was not as if she had wanted to leave him dying. But, enacting her plan had been her priority at that moment. Now that her plan had failed miserably, she wanted to take a look at him.

Nonetheless, seeing that he was faring much better than expected was quite baffling.

"You...How?" She just asked, as her eyes gave him a quick once over.

"Do you mean how I am still alive? Or how I am already healed?"

Dilan just returned her question with questions of his own, the left corner of his lips turned into a smirk.

However, instead of wasting more time, he decided to stop playing around. Thus, he answered her before she could,

"Well, I think around six hours or so passed since you went upstairs, so I had more than enough time to recuperate, I guess.

I have quite a few broken bones, and it hurts, but overall, I look quite decent, don't I?"

Dilan never really had problems striking a conversation with others.

It was just that he never really took the effort to initiate a conversation with others even before the Primordial Ascension.

He noticed that she was sizing him up, to gauge the truth behind his comment about his looks and injuries, which caused her to frown deeply.

She noticed the Bow, the gloves that were covered in brown scales, and the neat-looking ring.

They were all new goods, which was quite easy to deduce, but the young woman didn't really bother about it.

Her mood was still down because she had been unable to pass the third floor.

As such, she couldn't care less about the kind of equipment Dilan got or anything else related to him.

"I'm Dilan Cier. Thanks for saving me earlier!" He introduced himself, knowing that he would have died without her help.

Even if he was not a person of many words, Dilan felt the need to thank her.

The young woman just nodded her head before replying,

"Kathrine Berg. No problem."

Kathrine knew that Dilan would have been able to kill the big monster by himself if his equipment had been strong enough at that time.

Thus, she believed that she only gave him a helping hand to finish it off.

However, Dilan was of a different opinion but that was not something Kathrine could be bothered about right now.

Clearly seeing the expression on Kathrine's face and following her gaze that flitted to the stairs to see if some monster had followed her, Dilan tilted his head.

"If you need to go up later again, why don't you come with us to the cafeteria for some time? There are a few more Survivors. Most of them are fine, I guess."

Dilan just got an idea that had to do with several ideas that flashed through his mind.

Kathrine seemed to be determined to reach the third floor, even if it was just to pass through it and go higher.

The fact that she was not strong enough showed that she had to level up, which meant that she could either use the Gate to level up, or go out of the hospital and hunt together with them.

Her lightning bolt was powerful, and Kathrine didn't seem to be scared to fight.

There might not be a reason for Dilan to trust her, but she saved him once and was ready to fight, giving him more than enough reason to think highly of her.

However, at the end of the day, Dilan didn't fully trust all of the Survivors, even if there were some that he regarded highly.

And Kathrine had saved his life as well, giving her some extra points!

Thus, he hoped that she would join them.

"Other Survivors...?" Kathrine asked in confusion after she heard what Dilan said. Her mood improved for a moment only to plummet just a second later as she thought,

'I doubt that she would have reached the cafeteria from the fourth floor, that's unlikely. Either, she is up there, or....dead...'

Clenching her fists, she looked upward once again before frowning deeply as a frustrated sigh escaped her mouth.

"Why don't you level up before you try it again? My first impression might not be the best, but look at it from a different perspective; My condition was worse than a zombie's, and now I'm perfectly fine...well I'm alive and able to fight again!"

Kathrine turned her head to look at Dilan, whose entire body was drenched in his own blood and the sleeves of his tracksuit were torn and hanging limply from his shoulders.

But even then, she couldn't help but curse inwardly.

'Bad impression, my foot!!'

'Bad impression, my foot!!' Kathrine nearly blurted out just to continue her thoughts,

'You fought with your life on the line, and never gave up. How the hell is that supposed to leave a bad impression of you on me?!'

If it were not for Dilan's disadvantage in terms of equipment, he would have easily won.

This was a clear sign for him to use better weapons in the future.

He knew better than to repeat the same mistake again.

At least, normal humans wouldn't repeat the same mistake after ending up in the same or a similar state as it was the case for Dilan.

An involuntary smile crept on her lips when she thought about it.

It was just for a moment, but the comfort she felt made her a little bit calmer than before.

Because of this short moment of respite, her earlier opinion changed as she nodded her head.

"Alright, I'll be in your care...I guess?"

Saying this to someone, who looked more dead than alive, was kind of strange.

But after a moment, Kathrine just shrugged her shoulders before walking down the stairs as her mind returned to the monster she had encountered on the third floor..

'Why is it not following me? Does it think there are more powerful monsters below, or does it want to stay in its territory?'

Kathrine was not sure what the correct answer was, but she could tell for sure that the War Krendel was nothing in comparison, at least if one were to look at several traits of the monster she fought.

Just the thought of the vile creature caused shivers to run down her spine.

'I have no time left anymore...the longer I wait, the smaller her chances of survival...' Kathrine thought. Her eyes flicked to Dilan, and she asked a question in her head.

'You will be able to help me right?'

[Meanwhile in the cafeteria]

While Dilan and Kathrine encountered each other outside the cafeteria, the atmosphere inside was tense.

Everyone had clearly heard multiple thunderous noises from the floor above them.

The sound of thunder, walls breaking, and various other sounds had reached their ears despite the thick wall in between.

It was clear that something was awfully wrong, which worried even Oliver.

At first, nobody realized that Dilan was missing, and it was only when the sun rose that their fear was replaced by astonishment and finally shock.

"Wait, was Dilan the one causing all the ruckus...or was the being he fought the source of the ear-splitting noise?!?"

They could clearly recall Dilan's frustration from the day before and expected him to act differently today.

But when they didn't hear or see him around, they were astonished at first, just to realize that he was not even present in the cafeteria.

In no time, Oliver figured out that one of the nurses had helped him leave silently, which caused him to glare at her, his anger clearly visible.

"You...let him out alone?!" He couldn't help but growl after some time, unable to understand how someone could be stupid enough to help an angered person leave the only safe place they had.

It was simply incomprehensible how a nurse in a hospital that worked with mentally-ill patients couldn't understand the mind of humans.

Oliver was simply too frustrated, and the nurse's answer made him feel as if he.

"Yeah, why not? It looked like he had a plan in mind. And it is not like we didn't see how strong he was..."

The nurse was slightly frightened because Oliver looked at her as if he was ready to kill.

But that was not everything because the fact that Dilan was likely to have died indicated that there were even stronger and more ferocious monsters in the hospital!

This was something everyone was afraid of, and it made them feel like it might be better to avoid leaving the cafeteria for the time being.

Almost everyone's attention was drawn to the chained doors of the cafeteria, and a trace of worry about the unknown future in their eyes was clearly visible.

All of a sudden, the doors began to shake violently as a seemingly ear-piercing banging resounded through everyone's ears, making them feel as if their eardrums would burst.

It was as if time had slowed down, and they all felt shivers run down their spines, and even Oliver flinched.

His hand moved towards the rat horn daggers, just to hear a familiar voice from outside.

"Guys, it's me. Open the doors!"

When they heard Dilan's voice, everyone's reaction was different.

Some closed their ears, while others didn't believe that Dilan was perfectly fine.

Meanwhile, it was Bianne, who had already gotten her hand on the lock's keys that held the chain in place.

In a matter of seconds, she had opened the lock and removed the chains, allowing Dilan to enter the cafeteria, without having asked anyone about their opinion.

It was pretty obvious that some would be more vigilant against Dilan right now, but that didn't seem to be important to Bianne.

Yet, the moment she opened the doors for Dilan, the scene in front of her took away the young woman's breath.

Her legs gave in the moment she saw what Dilan looked like.

After she slumped to the ground, the others were able to see Dilan as well.

This caused several survivors to nervously exhale, while others were just staring at him with widened eyes.

Everyone's shock was visible, and Dilan raised his hand to show the peace sign indicating that he was fine.

The day before, he was still frustrated, and also angry.

But having fought against numerous monsters, the Mutated Swiftess Zombie, and the War Krendel, Dilan had been able to calm down.

His stress was completely released. There was no reason for him to be overly enraged as well because the others would either do something or simply watch as bystanders.

Dilan was fine with that as long as nobody demanded something from him without contributing to making the lives of others more comfortable in their small community.

Even then, it should be reasonable, but that was only obvious.

With that in mind, he didn't waste his time in explaining the situation as he removed his backpack.

Taking out the Tierat Dagger, he threw it to Oliver in a high arc, before he did the same with the Cold-metal Bow.

"It is possible to exchange 50 Essence crystals at the Gate to receive a treasure. The Gate is at the end of the left corridor on the second floor, made of a blue liquid that looks like portals one can sometimes see in games, or fantasy novels."

His short explanation was more than enough to explain everything that had happened, just for everyone to look at him in confusion, shock and astonishment.

Only now did Kathrine realize where Dilan got his equipment from as she nodded her head in understanding.

"And...what about the monster that made the dents on the second floor? Did you kill it? Is that why you look like this?"

It was Oliver, who asked this question after he took a look at the Tierat dagger.

The dagger was certainly good, and Oliver quickly understood that the Gate, which he had yet to see, was a great thing to reap rewards.

But even then, he didn't think that everything was as simple as Dilan made it look.

"I didn't kill it. I nearly died. She killed it." Dilan just said before pointing at Kathrine next to him.

Kathrine looked like a young woman, and not like a fierce Valkyrie or some sort of War Goddess.

As such, everyone couldn't help but look at him in doubt as he looked like a warrior who had ascended from the ashes of his victims.

'Is he joking?'

Chapter 46 Kill or leave!

Seeing that nobody believed him, Dilan couldn't help but shake his head lightly.

"It's true, but whatever. Her name is Kathrine, and she will probably join us temporarily."

Taking a look at her he halted for a moment just to quietly ask,

"Should we start hunting for Essences tomorrow onwards?"

It was quite obvious that Kathrine needed to get stronger to pursue her goal which made him ask this question.

As such, Dilan couldn't help but smile wryly. He didn't really feel fit enough to fight right now.

There were still quite a few broken and dislocated bones in his body that were mending and relocating to their original place.

Kathrine saw that his condition was still far from being good, which was why she nodded her head, even if it was only in reluctance.

“I need to reach the fourth floor as fast as possible...so please recover quickly...”

She was aware that it was not in Dilan’s hands to recuperate faster, but she could still hope for the best outcome.

After all, she could tell that the monster on the third floor was not something she could defeat alone.

This frustrated her, and the desperation arising out of her helplessness could be seen in her dark eyes.

It was clearly visible that she had something important to do on the fourth floor..

Thus, Dilan gave her a small smile as he used his [Regeneration] ability once again.

‘If she is ready to risk her life for the person on the fourth floor, I shouldn’t slack off, right?’

He assumed that there had to be someone she was searching for on the fourth floor.

Otherwise, there wouldn’t be a reason for Kathrine to be that hurried, and desperate.

Dilan had been disappointed way too often due to the callous attitude of other Survivors.

Because of this disappointment, it was refreshing to see Kathrine care for someone else and be desperate enough to risk rushing all the way to the hospital, up the stairs.

And that was after considering that it was likely for ferocious monsters that were strong enough to tear her apart to be on the higher floors.

If Dilan were to be honest, one had to be extremely lucky to survive the last six days without any kind of trouble.

He hoped the best for Kathrine, but decided against saying anything.

Instead, he switched his attention back to the backpack.

“Great, they’re still alive,” he mumbled, as he dug his hand into the backpack.

A moment later, Dilan pulled three horned rats out of the backpack, while tightly gripping their lengthy tails.

They looked just like corpses and were partially squashed, bones protruding out of their small bodies, or they had been severely injured by Dilan before.

Several hours had already passed since the massacre against the Krendels and horned rats ended.

The floor was littered with dead and half-dead, lethally injured monsters.

If they didn’t die while Dilan recuperated from his similar deadly injuries, he ended their life with a final slash of his spear.

For now, he spared only three horned rats that were the least injured and likely to be able to survive a few more hours.

This allowed him to pull them out, and they began twitching to wrestle free of his grasp. This caused confusion in the group of Survivors as they had deemed the horned rats to be dead.

Yet, several Survivors retreated in fright when they saw that the rats were still moving.

“You...what are you planning?!” One of the older male Survivors asked in an anxious voice.

He was the same man from the day before and hearing his voice, almost everyone felt like punching the man in the face.

But they remained silent and stared at the horned rats in Dilan’s hand with several questions in their mind.

‘Will he finally start providing us with living corpses so we can kill them to get their Essence and status points?’

A few had such assumptions, but Dilan didn’t even notice that as his attention diverted to the nurses who were in one big group.

However, instead of looking at the two older nurses that helped him out before, he looked at the three newcomers.

His reason for doing so was quite obvious and his eyes turned cold as he said,

“Each of you has to kill one, or you guys can leave! If you guys don’t want to fight, give the abilities you will receive to someone else.

If they’re useful for some other job, such as something you guys can do, take them as a means to support the entire group. If you don’t want to pursue the specific path the ability will lead to, give it to someone who needs it!”

By now, the other survivors had gotten a little bit used to Dilan’s behavior, which was different in the case of the nurses.

Because that was quite obvious, Dilan knew that he wouldn’t be able to achieve much by talking nicely to the nurses.

His words might sound harsh because he was forcing the nurses to kill a living being or to die outside the safe shelter, which the cafeteria represented.

As such, it was quite obvious which choice they would take.

However, it was quite astonishing that Dilan seemed to be serious about throwing them out if the three nurses wouldn’t kill the half-dead horned rats.

Kathrine didn’t expect the situation to turn out like this.

She was witnessing everything as a stranger who knew nothing about the group’s past experiences and hardships.

The way in which Dilan acted was quite overbearing, which was a sharp contrast to his earlier behavior when they had encountered each other.

But she clearly understood his reason for Dilan to behave like this.

Kathrine was fully aware of the use and the necessity of possessing powerful abilities.

After all, a powerful ability was able to change the tides of an entire battle.

Her own ability was the best example for this scenario.

She was only level 5, but her ability was powerful enough to kill the War Krendel with ease.

And that monster had been at level 9, with stats manifold higher than hers!

There were not only attack-type abilities as well. Some had different uses and it was especially the high variety of abilities that made out a balanced and mighty group!

Because her understanding of an ability's value was thorough, along with equally great comprehension skills, it was quite obvious what the Shelter's situation looked like to her.

'There is no direct Leader, but because Dilan is the strongest, and one of the few, who dares to fight monsters head-on, he can do whatever he wants, is that it?'

In the end, this would mean that she would be able to get in the good books of the entire group just by showcasing her ability.

This was certainly not good because it was quite obvious how little the group trusted each other.

Small groups had formed in the community of 19 Survivors, and their boundaries were quite obvious.

Kathrine didn't like this, only to perceive that everyone's outlook on Dilan changed a little bit.

'Even if he seems to act quite domineering, the others don't fear him.'

Her conclusion was that Dilan didn't mistreat anyone and that he might even help others, which she clearly deduced based on the fact that Oliver and Ailee had been given a weapon to fight.

He trusted them enough to allow them to wield weapons.

It was as if he knew nobody would attack or backstab him.

And after looking through the room, her eyes fell on the two Glocks that were lying on the table, unguarded.

Someone could just take them and kill others in a fit of rage.

This was quite dangerous because some Survivors might just think about killing Dilan if he were to be too overbearing.

But then again, Kathrine also sensed that they needed him to survive.

Thus, she couldn't help but look at Dilan in a new light.

'Are you a leader in the shadows, or are you so unbothered by the others that you don't care about what they do?!

Kathrine was unable to understand Dilan, and this was something that bothered her.

Thus, she decided to observe him and his interactions with the group to find out more about him.

After all, the moment Kathrine would complete the task she came for, there would be no place for her to return!

Chapter 47 First hurdle

Everyone clearly understood what Kathrine had comprehended as well.

Contrary to Dilan who fought and earned his resources, the others would simply stay safe in the cafeteria and depend on him to save them. Thus, they knew that they were simply too weak to demand anything.

He didn't exactly request a lot from the three newcomers, considering that the three horned rats were taking their last breaths and would die soon, either way.

In simple terms, one could even say that the three nurses would free the rats of the pain by killing them.

It was not necessary for them to continue writhing in pain for several more hours because they would die, either way.

Nevertheless, the nurses couldn't help but exchange nervous glances and hesitate for quite a while.

But that was something Dilan expected.

It would be weird for them to simply take the rats from him and kill them without feeling anything.

However, what astonished Dilan a little bit was the fact that the youngest of the three nurses, Mira, chose to volunteer first.

Her gaze moved between the rat horned dagger Dilan held in one hand, and the horned rats. She gulped nervously before saying,

"Lay it on the ground...p...please..."

Mira was not able to think properly anymore. Her entire life had changed in the last six days, and she had been worried about all kinds of tragedies that would befall her.

But what she didn't realize at first was a simple fact that not only her life had changed, but that of everyone else around her as well.

The Primordial Ascension had turned everything mankind knew and abided by upside down..

In the end, it was just a bunch of humans who had quickly accepted the change and adapted to it readily, while others wanted to believe that they were dreaming, or that all of this was a bad joke.

At first, Mira was like most of the others, not daring to believe that the world had changed to the worst possible, but her beliefs and thinking had slowly changed.

She thought a lot about her behavior the day before and understood that fighting powerful monsters was not just risky, but life-threatening.

This is why Mira struggled a lot, only to accept that it had been quite dangerous for Dilan to take them in without imposing any kind of conditions or restrictions.

At the end of the day, if they didn't contribute in any way, they would just be baggage using up the group's limited resources, and living space, after all.

Seeing how Dilan looked right now, it was quite obvious how dangerous life outside the safe zone truly was.

Dilan and the others created this safe zone by risking their life.

This made it quite obvious that these so-called abilities, Mira had heard about, were very important to them.

As such she just did what she ought to do!

'I...probably shouldn't attract too much attention for the time being...!...just want to be alive, and safe...'
She thought while looking at the horned rat Dilan put on the ground.

He handed her the horned rat dagger, while one of his feet pinned down the rat to hold it in place.

The monster was not even able to squeal anymore, and its last efforts to escape were mild twitching.

Dilan didn't say another word and just watched her trembling hand hold the dagger as she bent down.

Mira was almost kneeling on the ground with one leg, trying to stop herself from shivering, the white of her knuckles clearly visible.

Her face was drained of all color too, but nobody said anything, not even the other nurses.

Everyone was quiet and watched Mira who gathered all her courage to stab the rat with the rat horn dagger.

After taking a deep breath, she plunged the dagger in the head of the horned rat on her first try, killing the half-dead rat in an instant.

But Mira couldn't be happy about that.

Witnessing the way the little beast flinched one last time after the dagger dug deep into it, she felt like vomiting.

She retched, and the dagger fell from her hand before she tried to jump up, and move away from the corpse, before throwing up.

This reaction of a repulse was quite common, even more so for someone, who was young, naive, and never felt the disgust of killing a living being with their own hands.

The feeling of the dagger blade cutting through the skin, and flesh of the monster, followed by the crush of its skull had been too much for Mira to handle and witness up close.

She had been a savior of lives in her profession, not someone who would take lives mercilessly.

As such, she didn't even see how the ability crystal congregated next to the rat's head.

Dilan made no move to pick up the ability crystal. It was not his, to begin with.

Instead, he released the claws of the Clawed gloves before piercing with his hand in the head of the horned rat.

When the others saw him casually breaking the skull of the horned rat before squashing its brain to take out the Essence crystal, they couldn't help shuddering.

"Urgh, do you have to make it look so disgusting?!" Kathrine couldn't help but ask. Her body shook once when she saw Dilan's rather gruesome way of obtaining the crystal.

Upon hearing her, he turned around with a confused expression on his face.

'Maybe he is a little bit dumb?' She thought, not sure if that was it.

However, Dilan was truly confused because he didn't think that it was disgusting to take out the Essence crystal as he did.

It saved quite a lot of time and effort.

But instead of saying anything to Kathrine, he just sighed before cleaning the gloves.

He lay down the Essence crystal next to the ability crystal, which he slid through the floor towards Mira, who was still retching and coughing violently.

Dilan believed that she would recover from the shock and digest it in some time, considering that the situation was quite a lot for a young girl such as her.

Standing up, he took one of the few plastic garbage bags they found before placing the horned rat into it.

The rat horn, Essence crystal and dagger had already been retrieved, so the rest of the rat's corpse was quite useless.

After all, none of them wanted to try eating rat meat.

Nobody was desperate enough to do this...for now.

Once he was done, he put down the other two horned rats on the ground.

They were not even able to move anymore. Laying the dagger in front of the two horned rats, Dilan looked at the two other nurses. He didn't have to explain what was required of them.

Because Mira took the first step, the two nurses could only comply as well.

Even if they didn't want to kill a living being because their job was to save lives, and not to take them, their deepest desire was to survive.

With that in mind, they managed to somehow kill the rats and two more Essence crystals and ability crystals popped up for each kil.

The two nurses were not as affected as Mira, and they immediately thought about absorbing the Essence crystal, which then crumbled in their hands, leaving behind the grayish ability crystals.

“The Essence within the level 2 horned rats might not be enough to level up, but after you kill a few zombies, it should be fine.”

He informed them, knowing that they wouldn’t suddenly be brave enough to be willing to go out hunting or anything like that.

Dilan simply stated facts, he was not demanding anything.

However, his hidden meaning was that if they were to bind the ability within the ability crystals, they would have to either fight, or do something that made everyone’s life easier.

At least, that was what everyone presumed Dilan to mean.

Whether that was the truth or not didn’t really matter to the Survivors, right now.

They simply assumed Dilan to be whatever they wanted- their savior, a warrior or simply their provider.

Because they were imagining things, the three nurses looked at the ability crystal in their hands before turning their attention to Dilan once again.

Mira had stopped vomiting and was now simply watching him with a pale expression.

She had just overcome the first important hurdle in her life, to fight her fears, and that she had to do some unpleasant things if she wanted to survive in the merciless world Milarn had turned into.

Just a moment later, her gaze returned to the ability crystal before she stated the name of her ability and her assumptions about it.

“My ability is called [Green Fingers(Passive)] Tier-0 ★★★. I guess that is for gardening or something like that?” Mira said after a short moment of hesitation.

Mira showed her willingness to bind it to herself as she presumed it to be quite helpful to stay out of combat, but still be of use to the group. The ability would come in handy once they were to start farming something.

It was not too hard to imagine that they would run out of food supply and have to look for food sources in the future as well. As such, creating and nourishing a farm was one of the most likely long term solutions.

Dilan just nodded his head before he said,

“If you focus on upgrading this passive skill, while learning more of it, you could become a farmer with lots of benefits and little issues.”

He didn’t really care if she wanted to keep the ability or not, but if she chose to pick the ability, she should be determined to continue doing it long term and not give up midway, that would be a total waste.

Nobody truly knew when they would get their hands on a second ability.

As such, it was only obvious for their first ability to be of use for them.

Mira just nodded her head before binding the ability to her.

Thus, the ability crystal crumbled, leaving the two other nurses with their respective abilities.

Chapter 48 Living conditions

“My ability is called [Warrior’s Strength(Passive)] Ungraded ★.” Ella, the nurse, who had helped Dilan to leave the cafeteria in the morning, said.

Afterward, she looked at the other nurse, without saying anything further. One could easily predict what kind of effect Ella’s ability would have.

But even then, she seemed to be contemplating what she should do with the ability.

Dilan accepted this with a short nod. He felt that the passive ability would be quite decent in terms of providing additional stats as long as one focused on upgrading it.

As such, all of them believed that Dilan would want the passive ability for himself.

However, he looked quite unbothered about the fact that Ella was contemplating.

His attention turned towards the other nurse, who looked at her ability a little bit sadly.

“It says [Higher Vision(Passive) Ungraded ★★★★★...”

She was visibly displeased, only to add something after a short sigh,

“Someone else can take the ability crystal... I would rather not fight!”

For her, it was more than enough to see Dilan’s current appearance and never want to enter a battle.

He looked as if he had barely survived and missed death by a hair’s breadth while fighting against some sort of powerful monster.

Not wanting to face the same life-threatening dangers as him, she would rather do some chores.

On the other hand, the ability crystal in her hand crumbled as Ella absorbed it.

This astonished quite a few people, but Dilan simply nodded his head..

“You’ll have to fight then. But no worries, it won’t really be problematic as long as you focus on fighting beings weaker than you.

With your ability, it should be quite easy to become rather powerful!”

Dilan was not really affected by Ella’s choice. The ability might have been a great asset for himself, but he was more than glad to have one more fighter in their rows. After all, everything would become much easier with more helping hands.

As such, he felt quite happy, which led him to take one of the eight War Krendel claws out of his backpack.

“If you work properly on shaping and fixing it, it can be turned into a dagger or the tip of a spear.”

They didn't really have much of a weapon choice, to begin with.

Using what they could find was their only choice.

Thus, Ella just nodded her head, not really understanding the value of the claw she was just handed.

After considering something for a moment he gave two claws to Oliver.

“In case one of them breaks again!” He said with a faint smile on his lips, clearly recalling that he had broken the Reinforced Stone Daggers in his last fight.

There were still five more Claws left, but he didn't really feel like giving them to the others.

Right now, he was just tired, and wanted to sleep for a few hours.

However, first he wanted to eat something, which was why he thought of entering the kitchen.

But just when he moved aside the sliding doors, Bianne appeared in front of him, blocking Dilan's path.

“Look at yourself. If you want our food, and the entire kitchen to stink, and be dirty, go ahead!”

Bianne was not being overly confident in facing Dilan head-on, but she had a really hated a few things, such as a dirty kitchen, and dirt or something else inside her food.

This led her to subconsciously place herself between the kitchen and Dilan, who could only stare at her blankly for a moment.

But the way she placed her hands on her hips and stared down at him made him follow her gaze. It was only now that he saw what he looked like and gave an exasperated sigh.

Only now did he recall that his clothes were drenched in blood and that his face didn't look any better.

Thus he turned back to the cafeteria doors before he mumbled.

“A bunch of clothes and a mattress would be great!”

Afterward, he simply walked out of the cafeteria, fully prepared to loot a few patient wards.

He didn't show any interest in the others, nor did he foolishly assume that the other Survivors must have put their time to some fruitful cause.

After all, he knew that nobody had dared go to the second floor for the last few hours.

The entire morning, nobody had stepped outside the cafeteria.

That meant nothing had progressed in their group, meaning that food was the only thing Dilan didn't cook by himself.

Seeing that Dilan didn't even consider sending out other survivors for a quick check and instead simply took the plastic bag with the three horned rat corpses, and the backpack with him, without looking anyone in the eye, everyone felt a little bit guilt-ridden. He said nothing but the way his shoulders sagged and he dragged himself away from the others made them feel uneasy.

Somehow, even Kathrine felt guilty of not doing anything.

And she had just reached the small shelter.

As a reaction to Bianne's words, Kathrine looked at her own clothes.

They were still rather clean, and she didn't smell much.

But even then, thinking about new clothes made her move rather instinctively.

Meanwhile, the others looked at each other before frowning deeply while Ailee couldn't help but mumble,

"At least, he doesn't look visibly angry anymore..."

Ailee predicted that Dilan wanted to calm himself by clearing the second floor.

This resulted in Dilan awarding himself with a lot more pain, which was quite easy to tell according to his appearance.

Nonetheless, both Ailee and Oliver couldn't help but feel that something was off about him.

They figured that their strength was not even close to possibly fighting him if that was something they would ever desire.

And even if their abilities were quite useful in terms of gaining experience to wield one specific weapon, and hunt, Dilan was on a completely different level.

He had actively acquired experience by fighting monsters after the Primordial Ascension and seemed quite capable of staying level-headed while enduring tremendous pain.

That was something both Ailee and Oliver had witnessed more than once.

If they were to think about it, Dilan was always in pain owing to some sort of unique incident, which made them doubt that he was doing this intentionally, even if they knew that this was not the case.

However, if they were to know that Dilan was considering injuring himself lethally, their entire opinion of him would have changed.

But for now, the two were oblivious to Dilan's requirements to upgrade his Origin ability.

As such they were clueless about what awaited them in the future as long as they stayed by Dilan's side.

For now, their plan was to rush to his side, and get their hands on some neat clothes, as well as a mattress!!

Their living conditions had improved considerably, but a few survivors would always find excuses to avoid going to the second floor.

They were just lazy or truly too afraid to get bitten by a zombie.

Unfortunately, this excuse was not feasible anymore because the second floor had been cleared.

This only included the part of the hospital they were in, but that was everything that mattered for them to step in it without being afraid of a zombie ambush.

Understanding that they had no excuse to remain idle anymore, the few Survivors chose to move as well.

In the end, everyone knew that it was important to get at least a little bit of comfort in the current testing times.

Nobody knew how long it would last, and they should gain the most out of it.

With that in mind, everyone began to move and got busy. Some picked up new clothes and carried the mattresses of the unoccupied patient wards to their safe haven.

Hours passed, and the large cafeteria turned into a comfortable place for everyone to stay.

Only Bianne had been left alone in the kitchen because she couldn't just leave it open and unguarded.

Fortunately, some other Survivors brought her some things, which was something Dilan noticed as well.

Dilan was finally ready to shower after enduring six days full of sweat, dirt, blood, flesh, internal organs and so on!

He ignored his pain as much as possible, which led him to ignore the discomfort he felt while activating the Origin ability as he used it whenever it was possible.

Thus, his current condition was already much better than before as he took off his clothes when he reached the bathroom that they found on the second floor.

At this moment, someone rushed in, and saw him in his underwear.

It was one of the older Survivors, who had been taking a shower in the patient room next to him.

"There is a zombie running on the floor!! Heel--..."

He chickened out at the sight of an ordinary zombie, which led Dilan to look over to the middle-aged man in annoyance, while the man stared at him in astonishment.

Dilan's entire back was still bluish due to the numerous bruises, his arm looked bad as well, in addition to the rest of his body that looked beaten and injured as well.

Despite the numerous injuries and bruises on his body, the middle-aged man's gaze was glued on Dilan's right leg.

"Are those...zombie scratches?"

Dilan just smiled upon seeing the fright in the eyes of the middle-aged man, and he couldn't help but start chuckling.

"So you do know what zombie scratches look like. Not bad! You might even be more intelligent than I expected you to be!"

Chapter 49 Dependence

It was quite obvious that Dilan didn't like the middle-aged man.

But that was something he never intended to hide, to begin with.

And Dilan was not the only one, who was fed up with the middle-aged man's behavior.

After all, he was the laziest, and most frustrating Survivor they had in their entire group!

That was why Dilan didn't even bother to explain anything to him about the zombie scratches on his right leg as he continued to put on a clean set of clothes.

Seeing that Dilan was nonchalantly putting on his clothes as if he didn't even worry that he would go and reveal this fact to the other survivors, the middle-aged man couldn't help but stare at him for a few seconds.

However, just when Dilan lifted his head, the growling of a zombie could be heard right behind the middle-aged man.

The zombie that had somehow escaped one of the patient wards approached the middle-aged man, startling him.

Terrified by the sudden appearance of the zombie, along with Dilan who he believed would most likely turn into a zombie at any moment, the middle-aged man fled from the scene.

He escaped with a rapid speed, astonishing Dilan a little bit as he put on the Clawed Gloves.

They repelled all kinds of dirt and stains, which was quite useful as he didn't have to wash them from time to time.

When he was completely clothed, Dilan catapulted himself towards that one particular zombie, the middle-aged man had feared.

He punched forward with his fist, blasting the head of the zombie into the wall, just to look at the monster, shaking its head.

"They have really gotten way too weak. I guess the ordinary zombie's only value is to turn their Essence crystals into Trash graded treasures or to provide abilities to new Ascenders."

Shrugging his shoulder, Dilan pulled the zombie out of the wall before he flung it into the patient ward he had just come out of.

Afterward, he took his bag before leaving the room once again.

Marking the patient ward just a moment later, Dilan tried to find the middle-aged man, just to see that he had long since vanished.

"I didn't expect him to be able to run that fast. Did he get an ability related to an improvement in speed?"

Dilan got slightly curious but then shook his head, ignoring this insignificant fact.

He clearly knew that the middle-aged man would never fight voluntarily, so there was no need to make a fuss out of it.

'Looks like I have to explain my passive ability to them.'

Dilan was not exactly bothered about the confusion the middle-aged man would cause by revealing what he had seen to the other survivors because he knew that he could easily clear it.

As such, he didn't even hurry up as he walked down the stairs leading to the first floor.

"He was scratched!! In no time, Dilan will turn into a zombie, and kill all of us!!!!" The middle-aged man screamed hoarsely after running inside the cafeteria.

Panicking at the thought, he even tried to lock the doors so as to keep Dilan out of the cafeteria and away from them.

However, Dilan could only smile faintly as he pushed open the cafeteria's doors the moment he reached them.

Given his strength which was higher than the average human strength before the Primordial Ascension by four times, he was not worried about being attacked and overwhelmed.

As he walked in the curious gazes of many Survivors fell on him.

Everyone was already in the cafeteria, trying to improve their living conditions in every possible way.

As such, all Survivors heard that Dilan was scratched, which caused the instinctive reaction to look at Dilan warily.

Seeing that Dilan appeared to be perfectly fine, despite the fact that he had been beaten into a pulp just half a day ago, nobody was sure whether they should believe the middle-aged man.

But Dilan just nodded his head and answered their unspoken question.

"Yeah, I was scratched."

His voice sounded so casual as if he was not talking about himself, or it made no difference to him.

Yet, the effect of his words was drastic as everyone stared at him in shock.

All of them had witnessed what would happen to someone, who had been scratched or bitten.

As such, according to their assumptions, Dilan was bound to turn into a zombie.

Some survivors couldn't help but instinctively back off while others were too flabbergasted to even move.

"Are you serious? But....how...I don't believe it!" It was Oliver, who said this nervously.

He was the most shocked in their entire group because he knew how strong Dilan was.

That was also the reason why he couldn't really believe that Dilan had been infected by a zombie, let alone that he would die.

"Oh, it was a Bronze Mutated Swiftness Zombie. I must say it was quite fast, and I could only kill it by allowing it to scratch me. Though, it was definitely worth the risk!"

Dilan was still calm when he explained what had happened, and was trying to appease the crowd that stared at him. Meanwhile, Kathrine just looked at Dilan in confusion, self-doubt, and a trace of suspicion.

'Did I choose the wrong one? But then again...why has he not yet turned into a zombie? Something is wrong..'

Her conclusion was simply to wait for a moment and watch the situation that was about to unfold in front of her.

Without Dilan, she had no reason to stay in the cafeteria.

He was the only one who could help her as she had already spoken to Oliver and Ailee, who were the next strongest in their group, and dismissed enlisting them to assist her.

Neither of them was exactly powerful, and even their abilities were mediocre at most.

It was impossible for them to fight a being several levels above them, let alone the opponent on the third floor.

"Well, my passive ability is called [Lesser Immunity] and it includes the immunity from being infected by zombie scratches. The current limit is four zombie scratches a day."

Dilan simply continued to explain his ability and its effect.

However, it looked like everyone's doubts intensified the more details Dilan added to the story, and soon began to question just how many times Dilan had been scratched.

Some believed that he had the Lesser Immunity ability, while others murmured amongst each other.

They began to gossip, and Dilan could only look at the small group. His eyes turned cold, as he said out loud,

"If you guys want me to leave, I will take some food, and leave immediately. This might be for the best for all of us. I don't know how long I can endure the stupidity of some Survivors, to be honest."

He just shook his head after making clear that his life didn't depend on the people sheltered there, let alone the cafeteria.

The chains that locked the cafeteria's doors were completely useless if a monster like the War Krendel were to reach the first floor.

As such, the 'safe-zone' he created was just a psychological barrier to the mental health of all Survivors, nothing more or less.

The moment he left, monsters would be able to start spreading out once again as well.

Maybe Oliver and Ailee would be able to clear the misunderstanding and take care of everything, but Dilan was not exactly sure if they would stay with the other survivors as well.

They seem to trust him more than the other survivors, and felt safer with him as he was, by far, the strongest around.

"I believe you!" One of the older nurses suddenly exclaimed. She was the one who had tended to his wounds before. His gaze flicked to her as she continued to speak,

"If I remember correctly, you were gravely injured when you arrived in the hospital. That was already after the Primordial Ascension. Afterward, you were shot twice, and now it's the third time you have been injured.

Your wounds heal rapidly, you have yet to get an infection or anything like that, and that is the case despite the utter lack of hygiene we had in the cafeteria until today!"

It was quite obvious that the old nurse was trying to convince others that it was close to impossible for Dilan to be unscathed in the highly infected surroundings while being injured for the last 6 days.

There had never been a time he was fully healed, and after understanding this, some Survivors calmed down.

The middle-aged man was not amongst the group of Survivors who had calmed down, but nobody truly bothered about him.

Everybody's attention was on Dilan, and they couldn't lose him, even if there was a small chance that he was lying about the Lesser Immunity ability.

"I believe you too. I don't think that you would endanger our lives if you are sure that you would not turn into a zombie!" Ailee suddenly announced, appearing next to Dilan.

She showed no hesitation to give him her support, and soon after Oliver, Sarah and Bianne followed suit.

In the end, there was no need to make Dilan leave. It was more important for him to stay instead.

Understanding that the confusion had ended, Dilan took a deep breath before he said,

"If there is nothing else, I would be happy to eat something, and then sleep. As long as I don't turn into a zombie tomorrow, everyone should be able to understand that I wasn't lying."

Afterward, he walked in the kitchen, took a plate of the food Bianne had prepared, and left the kitchen once again.

He went in his usual corner as before, sat down cross-legged on the mattress he had brought from the patient ward before he started to eat.

One plate was not enough for him because his body required several times the nutrition others needed.

But that was only obvious owing to the injuries he sustained.

Utilizing the [Regeneration] Origin ability over and over again, he healed much faster.

Sometimes, one could hear the faint sound of his bones realigning themselves, but Dilan was not bothered by the others' worry.

Instead, he finally decided to rest by taking a look at the War Krendel's claws.

Using the Clawed Gloves to grind them a little bit, Dilan was very careful in shaping them.

He wanted to create useful weapons out of the War Krendel's claws while using the Clawed Gloves only if the situation demanded it as he believed that it was more efficient to wield daggers than to fight with the Gloves!

Once he was done with two daggers, Dilan kept leaning against the wall before his eyes closed, and slipped into a well-deserved deep sleep.

Chapter 50 First Floor

When he woke up the next morning, Dilan noticed that a few things had changed.

It was barely dawn and the first rays of sunlight had reached the cafeteria.

And this was necessary for them to be able to see something as the generators of the hospital didn't seem to work anymore.

Dilan felt that seven days were not really a long time for them to have lasted, and when Bianne came out of the kitchen, her mortified expression clearly showed what was going on.

"The water has run out as well?" Ailee asked, looking at Bianne with a trace of fear in her eyes.

She hoped that Bianne would shake her head and say that a horde of zombies had appeared in the kitchen instead.

That would be much better.

Unfortunately, this was not the case as Bianne revealed the bitter reality after issuing a deep sigh.

"Yes, we no longer have potable water..."

It was not as if nobody had expected this, but everyone had hoped for this to take a little bit longer to happen.

Their life had just improved a little bit after moving mattresses and new clothes to the cafeteria.

As such, Bianne was slightly frustrated, only for Dilan to walk into the kitchen in a nonchalant manner.

A moment later, the sounds of pots being moved could be heard just for the sound of trickling water to follow suit.

Bianne and Ailee rushed towards Dilan, somehow expecting to see something grotesque. .

"Just use this for now. I will keep the ring with me, so just take it from me when you need it. Otherwise, some Survivors might try to steal it from you."

Handing over the Ring of Yarad for a short while, Bianne's eyes widened as she finished reading the description.

"That...is amazing!!" She said, just for Ailee to appear next to Bianne to get the notification about the Ring of Yarad as well.

"100 liters for 5 Units of mana. Every day at that!! That is literally a lifesaver!!!"

Ailee was so excited that her voice reached every corner of the cafeteria, only to notice that she shouldn't attract too much attention.

However, Dilan didn't seem to mind her behavior much as he simply gave her a faint smile.

"Our group is still small, so this should be perfectly fine. Still, if you keep a look at this 'Trash' treasure, you two might understand that its value is not as bad as one might imagine."

Dilan was pretty sure that the Ring of Yarad came from the batch of Krendel Essence crystals.

As such, he presumed that higher leveled monsters provide better treasures.

But that was not something he could prove yet.

Only by hunting level 0 zombies would he be able to prove his theory. He wanted to see whether he would receive worse treasures or not.

Ailee had yet to create her first batch of arrows, but she could fight with daggers.

This was no problem for the time being, while Dilan simply shared his knowledge with the two women.

After a while, Kathrine entered the kitchen as well.

She had heard Ailee's exclamation and decided to take a look, contrary to the others, who were only staring at the closed sliding door, unsure whether to enter or not.

Dilan was the type of person they didn't want to offend in any way.

Thus, considering that he was still a human right now, and had not turned into a zombie and began growling, they presumed that he might hold a grudge against some of them.

This was not the case because Dilan didn't even bother to remember the face of the Survivors, who had looked at him in fear and doubt and been inclined to throw him out.

"So your plan is to clear the first floor completely, and use the Essence crystals you procure in order to exchange them with treasures?" Kathrine asked before thinking about it for a moment.

If they were to get lucky and gain a useful item, their chances to kill the monster on the third floor would increase as well.

With that in mind, she simply nodded her head before saying.

"Okay, but we should be fast. Afterward, we can go out to hunt a few monsters. The mountainside should provide us with more than enough monsters to kill. In the afternoon I want to try fighting the monster on the third floor!"

Kathrine stated her plans and said everything she found important. She clearly pointed out that time was something she didn't have.

Dilan had noticed this before already which was why he nodded his head.

"Of course, we can do that. But we should hurry up then!"

There was still more than enough time left until afternoon.

This meant that they had an hour or two at best to finish clearing the first floor and exchange the Essence crystals with the treasures they wanted to procure.

Stretching his well-rested body, he ate a slice of bread for breakfast before unlocking the chains of the cafeteria's doors.

Oliver and Ailee hurried after him as they had heard about his idea to clear the first floor completely and to go hunt outside.

They hoped to level up a few times today, which was why they showed their interest to fight and accompany him.

After all, they needed to become stronger in order to face opponents like Dilan.

The survivors had only heard Dilan's fight against the War Krendel, but it was quite obvious how terrifying it must have been.

"Are only the three of you fighting usually? That is less than expected." Kathrine suddenly remarked in a neutral tone.

But it was just a moment later that Sarah, Pierre, even Ella, and two more Survivors rushed towards them.

All of them understood the seriousness of the fact Dilan had been lethally injured by a monster.

They had to rely on themselves and get stronger, survive and protect not just themselves but also the people they loved.

Right now, they didn't even know if all of their loved ones were still alive, and their survival was on the line as well.

This clearly showed that they had to get their act together and learn to fight, even if this meant that they had to leave the safety of the cafeteria and risk their precious life.

With that in mind, the group of four turned into a group of 9 Ascenders, who dared to fight against the monsters of the Primordial Ascension!

Dilan was pleased by this sight because nearly half of their small community had decided to fight.

This was far more than he could have expected.

Thus, when they left the cafeteria doors, he was not able to hold back anymore.

He approached the locked door near the cafeteria before using his Clawed Gloves to pull them open.

What entered his sight was a large hallway that connected to several bigger halls, multiple elevators, a huge reception, and several more hallways.

While the second and the following floors of the hospital were divided into a total of four towers, the first floor was a huge complex, connecting everything else.

On the higher floors of the towers, one could also find some bridges that connected the towers, but that was not important right now as their main mission was entirely different.

Moments after he had stepped through the door frame of the door he had just pulled open, Dilan was able to see more than a hundred zombies.

They were flocked together and looked as if they were unlevelled.

Nothing about their appearance suggested any mutation or change, and everything seemed perfectly normal.

This was great, and it allowed Dilan to start a massacre. Using his Agility of 4.6 units, he catapulted himself ahead, leaving behind the others as he entered the fray, tightly holding the two War daggers he manufactured using the War Krendel's claws!

While Dilan manifested a true carnage, the others could only look at the way he fought in awe. His speed was quite high, but that was not what astonished everyone, who was gazing at him as if he was a born fighter.

Instead, it was the way Dilan gracefully fought like a predator without worrying about possible injuries.

He would simply accept all injuries that he would sustain if one of the zombies were to be capable of touching him before getting killed on the spot.

"If he doesn't have the Immunity ability, he really is insane..." Sarah couldn't help but mumble, while most of the other spectators nodded their heads, totally agreeing with her comments.

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Several hours later passed in the blink of an eye, and a weird atmosphere filled the air.

Kathrine found herself sitting on a small bench, her entire body drenched in sweat.

Looking up at Dilan, who was standing near her, and trying to focus on all nine of them, she gave a disappointed sigh.

"How the hell can you still stand?! Just how high is your Stamina???"

Dilan was currently breathing heavily, while simultaneously ensuring that nobody got ambushed by some monsters.

Every single one of them was currently drained of their stamina, which was why most of them were sitting on the ground or windowsill.

"I guess having a high Health stat means that my stamina consumption is less, while it recuperates much faster as well.

My Stamina stat is quite low..."

Dilan had yet to analyze every single statistic of his that existed in the Log of the Ancient.

However, he didn't have to pay attention to every little detail as time would tell him about everything either way.

As such, he just shrugged his shoulders before saying.

“How about we stay here until afternoon? I want to kill the mutated zombies and the Bronze monsters which we avoided earlier because of the others!”