

Warlord 51

Chapter 51 All at once (1 of 2)

After spending some time resting, everyone carried at least one bag filled with Essence crystals.

Each of them was about the size of an ordinary eraser, which meant that hundreds of Essence crystals could fit in a big bag.

However, they didn't get to hunt that many zombies as the overall number of monsters on the first floor was less than Dilan had expected.

According to his estimate, he presumed that they had hunted a total of 1000 ordinary zombies in a matter of four hours.

They avoided killing the mutated and Bronze zombies, which took most of their time, but they cleared the remaining parts of the first floor quite fast.

'I should have hunted the mutated and Bronze zombies all by myself. This would have saved us a lot of time...' Dilan grumbled to himself.

But if he had gone hunting all by himself, the others might have been endangered, and only he would have gotten more Essences and Status points.

This was certainly not the most efficient way to defeat the monster on the third floor.

According to Kathrine, it was an extremely fast zombie that looked similar to a centaur.

It was also stronger than the War Krendels, which was something Dilan could hardly believe.

'Is it level 10? Or Tier-1?'

Since his Clawed Gloves were capable of injuring the hide of beings at Tier-1 level 0, Dilan was pretty sure that one would be able to advance to Tier-1 after level 10..

It was probably comparable to choosing an occupation in some video games, or maybe exactly that!

Thus, he simply hoped the Zombie Centaur to be an overpowered monster at level 10!

Kathrine didn't care about its Essence crystal either, and her only goal was to reach the fourth floor.

Everything else was negligible, and who received the crystal wouldn't matter to her.

After understanding a few traits of the Zombie Centaur, it was quite obvious that it would take more than two people to kill the beast.

As such, Oliver, and Ailee were also required to help out.

They had to level up, needed more stats, and Ailee had to manufacture arrows out of the remaining War Krendel's claws.

That way, it was the easiest for them to attack from multiple angles, with each attack posing a minimum level of a lethal threat.

Dilan felt that this was important because he had experienced the dangers of fighting against monsters with too high a defense.

Because of that, he was not sure what exactly to feel when Kathrine told him that her attack took a long time to be initiated, which would make her miss the intended opponent.

This simply meant that the Zombie Centaur had an unknown high defense, while Kathrine was not even able to attack it with a quick bolt of lightning.

It made her ability [Lightning strike] Tier-0 ★★★★★ less useful than Dilan had hoped for.

Now that her attack was deemed useless, he tried to compute a plan, but to make use of it, everyone needed to be far more powerful.

Thus, the 1000 ordinary zombies they killed would be turned into Trash treasures.

If not all, at least, the Essence crystals of Ailee, Oliver, Kathrine and Dilan, that amounted to more than 90% of their entire loot should.

In the end, Dilan had hunted most zombies, approximately close to 300, simply because he didn't have to fear being scratched, while his Agility and Strength allowed him to slaughter his way through a large horde easily.

On the other hand, Sarah, Pierre and the new fighters were not as confident as Dilan and the others, which led them to fight less, and only one monster at a time.

Exchanging the Essence crystals didn't take long either because their group of four threw the Essence crystals inside the Gate on the second floor, while the others returned once they absorbed their Essence crystals.

[917 ordinary Essence crystals have been given to the gate. Exchange with 18 <Trash> Grade treasures, or 9 <Trash+> Grade treasures?]

The given choice was an unexpected one, but picking an option was easy.

However, instead of rushing things, they took two <Trash> Grade treasures, and one <Trash+> Grade treasure first!

[Ordinary Clock]

[Robe of Strength]

[Vial of Strength]

While the Clock was simply the worst and had no special use, the Robe of Strength provided a boost of 0.2 Strength units.

This was quite decent, but far from the use of the Vial of Strength.

[[Vial of Strength] <Trash+> Treasure

One-time use.

Boosts Strength stat by [5] Points for 30 Seconds!]

The Vial of Strength was simply too powerful to be considered a Trash treasure making them feel happy about the loot.

Following that, the rest seven 'Trash+' graded treasures were quickly drawn out.

In the end, they had been extremely lucky with the Vial of Strength as the following Trash+ graded treasures were not as exceptional as the Vial, but that was perfectly fine.

They were still of great use, which was the only thing that mattered as their small group of five people returned to the center of the hospital's entrance hall.

"Are you sure that you want to hunt 10 mutated or evolved zombies at the same time? Some of them have a really high speed..."

Kathrine suddenly asked him in an unsure voice.

She had been observing the Bronze zombies for quite a while and was pretty sure that she was not able to hunt 10 of them simultaneously.

In the end, her ability required one unit of mana and one second to charge, which meant that multiple opponents that were spread out in a bigger radius were at an advantage against her.

But Dilan seemed overly excited as he regained the desire and delight of killing, and fighting strong opponents.

Kathrine and the others had expected that Dilan would hold back on fighting powerful opponents.

After all, he was nearly killed more than a day ago.

If they were to know that Dilan was also planning to enter a near-death state on a daily basis, the others would simply call him crazy.

However, since he understood that his Stamina consumption was less than others, while it replenished faster as well, Dilan felt that it would be stupid to ignore upgrading his Origin ability!

But to do so, he had to be lethally injured!

Dilan decided to ask the nurses later about the best spot for a human body to be lethally yet not die immediately.

He didn't want his organs to be ripped open, or something that took an eternity to be tended to.

At best, he should be able to recuperate within half a day after being lethally injured. This would make things the easiest.

But he didn't really expect things to be easy, which was why he took the more difficult but also equally exciting path!

"If you want, I can fight all of them at once as well. I noticed that there were three Mutated Swiftess Zombies on the first floor.

As long as I take them out first, I can kill the remaining ones with my Clawed Gloves, raw strength and my active skill!"

Dilan sounded confident, but the others were not sure if he was overestimating his strength and capabilities a lot.

"Active skill?" Oliver just asked, confused, while Kathrine answered his doubt rather subconsciously,

"I think he meant this ability that causes an ear-piercing noise of a thunder." She gave a short answer, leaving out a more in-depth explanation about the electricity currents and so on.

"That was you?!" Oliver and Ailee simultaneously blurted out, just to look at Dilan in confusion.

The thunder noises had been the most frightening for them to hear in the morning the day before.

Thus, nobody had dared to go outside, even if they wanted to find Dilan.

And now they realized that it was Dilan, who had been the source of the thunderous noises, the entire time!!

'Why do I feel so foolish all of a sudden?!'

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When he released the [Thunder Step] ability, one unit of mana was used up, while his Agility received an enhancement of 30%.

Through this, he was able to shoot towards the three Mutated Swiftess Zombies.

The ear-piercing sound of thunder was unleashed by him, and electricity currents enveloped his feet as he bolted through the large hall at breakneck speed.

More than six mutated zombies noticed him, but Dilan's entire focus was on the three Mutated Swiftess zombies that were the closest to him.

Right now, he was not even holding the War daggers.

Dilan shaped his hands to form a crude-looking knife that used up a tenth of a mana unit to enhance the Clawed Gloves' sharpness and endurance!

As such, the moment he emerged in front of the zombies that finally noticed him, Dilan thrust out with one claw while the other one was used similar to a sword as he cleaved downward.

The thrust worked perfectly, as his hand cracked open the skull and reached the brain of the closest Mutated Swiftess Zombie.

They didn't possess the [Thunder Step] ability, which was something Dilan had sensed beforehand.

It made things much easier for him as he opened his fist within the zombie's brain, and squashed it.

His first attack had been an instant kill, while the cleave had been more of a means to distract the second zombie..

That had hit bullseye and prevented the zombie from noticing the bolt of lightning Kathrine had shot out at this moment.

Without much resistance, the zombie's head gave in, before it imploded.

However, Dilan didn't notice much of this because he had already moved to the second Mutated Swiftiness Zombie, killing it before the time of his activated ability ran out.

At the end of the day, his stats were already higher than that of a level five monster, even more so with the use of his great equipment and ability.

Hunting became much easier, even more so after he absorbed the two Bronze Essence crystals that provided him their potent Essence and Status points!

[Two <Bronze> Essences of a Tierless Level 5 Mutated Swiftiness Zombie have been absorbed → +0.3 Strength, +0.4 Stamina, +0.6 Agility]

[Essence pool has been filled. Host reached level 7! +0.5 Status points can be allocated!]

Dilan was happy to read the messages that popped up in front of him, which led him to smile lightly as he pulled the last Bronze Essence crystal out of the monster Kathrine had killed.

He threw the Essence crystal at her, as she had earned it. He was pretty sure that she was close to leveling up as well.

This was great and made him feel as if he should hasten up his hunting process even more.

"Let's finish off these four as well. Otherwise, it might become a bit more frustrating to hunt the remaining zombies!"

Not all mutated monsters were Bronze monsters.

As such, it was far easier to hunt them!

Dilan didn't even need to reuse his ability to fight the few zombies his [Thunder Step] ability had attracted.

Instead, he crippled the zombies, while the other three killed them in order to receive their Essence and Status points.

This took less than two minutes, which gave them more than enough time to gather the remaining 25+ mutated and Bronze zombies.

Dilan didn't waste much time as he used his superior Agility stat to lure all zombies towards the big entrance hall.

Only half an hour passed before a total of 21 higher leveled up mutated zombies and 7 presumed Bronze monsters were gathered at one spot.

Everything went according to his plan as none of the surrounding monsters was faster than Dilan.

It made things much easier for the group of four that was fully prepared.

Moving on to the next step of the plan they came up with not too long ago, Dilan bolted in a particular direction of the large hall.

The direction of his choice was straight toward the others, where Kathrine was already standing with her hands pointing straight at him.

A bolt of lightning formed in each of her hands, crackling with electric currents that swirled around her arms.

Kathrine's hands began to shake, and Dilan sensed that she wouldn't be able to control it for long.

As such, Dilan threw himself to the ground.

Not even a full second passed before he sensed a tingling sensation brush past his back.

This was his cue to jump up from the ground.

A moment later, he saw that Ailee and Oliver rushed past him, their eyes gleaming in delight.

Turning around, Dilan saw that a dozen or so zombies had been struck by the bolts of lightning.

Their plan was a full success, which led him to smile with childlike glee as he chose to exterminate the remaining unscathed monsters.

Meanwhile, Oliver and Ailee killed several zombies that had been injured by Kathrine.

Making use of their lethal injuries, and the War Krendel's claws, it was near impossible for Ailee and Oliver to miss out on killing the zombies.

However, they were no match to Dilan's expertise and couldn't compare themselves even remotely to him, who seemed to have changed since the day he had gone out in the dead of the night!

As always he was ready to cut, hack, slash and kill through zombies that were trying to scratch him.

Wearing the Robe of Strength, in addition to the Clawed Gloves, Dilan's Strength was just a hair's breadth away from being five times as strong as the average human before the Primordial Ascension.

Meanwhile, his Agility reached 6.7 the moment he activated the [Thunder Step] ability once again.

Inserting some mana in the Clawed Gloves, Dilan prepared himself to slaughter the opponents in front of him were mere ants that he could squash in his hands.

Adrenaline began to course through his veins as he emerged in front of the first large Zombie.

It was an ordinary mutated zombie and not a Bronze monster.

This made things much easier for Dilan as he could simply pierce through its entire skull with his accumulated force.

The feeling of being able to crush his opponent made his blood churn.

It was almost as if the blood within him was screaming for more!

And Dilan feasted on the sight of more blood, more death and excitement as he shaped his hands into claws.

He felt as if he was unleashing his inner beast, and it was great...to the extent that he was shocked about his own feelings.

Unable to hold back, he killed every single zombie in front of him ruthlessly, crushing their heads, and tearing them apart as if they were ordinary, unlevleed zombies.

Seeing this, the others stiffened for a moment, and Kathrine couldn't help but ask.

"Is...he always like this while fighting?!"

When the other two heard this question, they wanted to tell her that Dilan had never fought like this before.

But after giving it some thoughts, they realized that this was not true, and both Oliver and Ailee could only answer,

"Not...against more powerful or equally strong monsters..." Oliver started, just for Kathrine to nod her head as Ailee added,

"It's worse then..."

Chapter 53 Worry

Bathed in dark-red blood with bits of internal organs, and bone shards sticking to his body at odd places, Dilan was standing high above the corpses that littered the ground around him.

Their guts spilled out of the deep wounds Dilan had inflicted, and he stood like a Grim reaper over the corpses, taking in a few deep breaths.

It took him a while to calm down, but when his desire to slaughter a few more opponents had slowly subsided, a slow smile crept up his face.

If he had felt weak and powerless just a day ago, his mindset right now was the complete opposite.

But even then, he couldn't help but look at the dozen zombie corpses that lay on the ground, with two gaping holes left behind by just two bolts of lightning.

'Her active ability is really powerful!' Dilan thought before he looked at Kathrine.

He felt great to have a powerful partner by his side. Oliver and Ailee were not weak, but they still had a lot of catching up to do.

Thus, he was quite calm when thinking about the fight against the Zombie Centaur.

Without much of a rush, Dilan pilled the Essence crystals out of the zombies he had killed.

It was easy for all Ascenders to gauge which Essence crystals gave them the highest value, which also represented the contribution they had in killing the monsters.

As such, Dilan had it quite easy to find his share as he picked up a total of ten Essence crystals before he absorbed all of them.

[Four <Bronze> and Six <Ordinary> Essences have been absorbed→+1.1 Strength, +0.5 Health, +0.7 Stamina, +1.3 Agility, +0.3 Mana]

[Essence pool has been filled. Host reached level 8! +0.5 Status points can be allocated!].

Dilan noticed that his Essence pool was almost filled to the brim for the second time. This astonished him a little bit, but it was certainly great that he was close to reaching level 9!

The number of points he received that boosted his stats didn't actually astonish him. From a total of 10 corpses, he received around 4.0 Status points.

Considering that each of the zombies had been at level 5 or possibly even higher, this was not further astonishing.

However, Dilan clearly understood something.

'Right now, status points from each level up are worth quite a lot, but it looks like hunting Essence crystals for status points is more crucial...'

While this was already obvious before, right now it was almost impossible not to perceive this.

As such, the Zombie Centaur's threat was an unknown variable because nobody could tell how high its stats were.

Kathrine had only stated that its speed was higher than the War Krendel, which was not exactly helpful to Dilan as his own speed was more than 40% faster than the War Krendels right now.

And that was without the use of the [Thunder Step] ability.

"By the way, do you want to keep hunting to level up further? Because I would prefer to take a few zombie bones and manufacture arrows out of them. If possible, I would use the remaining War Krendel's claws as well..."

Ailee's voice floated towards him from behind, which led Dilan to turn around to look at her.

She was holding a zombie leg in her hand, and pointed at it, just to see a faint smile on Dilan's lips.

"I'm close to reaching level 9, so it would be best if I level up once more before we try to fight the Zombie Centaur."

Dilan wanted to add that they should search for a few Bronze monsters in order to exchange them with Bronze graded treasures.

But after thinking about it for a moment, he realized that Status points were more important for him to be able to fight the Zombie Centaur.

They had already amassed quite a few treasures, and Dilan didn't want to waste precious Bronze Essence and Status points in exchange for a possibly useful treasure for combat purposes.

“You are already close to level 9? I’m just level 7...” Kathrine suddenly announced, which made Ailee and Oliver exchange weird looks.

“Level 5...” Oliver mumbled, just for Ailee to nod her head, “Same...”

Dilan didn’t say anything further, but he wished to be close to level 10 because he wanted to enter the Permanent Gate to see how it was on the inside.

There must be many powerful monsters that provide lots of Essence, Status points and possibly even treasure or abilities!

As such, he wasn’t satisfied with being level 9, if one were to exclude the energy that coursed through him every single time he absorbed Essence.

“Alright, let’s go outside for a few hours, while Ailee finishes the arrows...” Kathrine added after learning about everyone’s level.

Urgency could be seen in her eyes and voice, but she was still able to conclude that the strength and combat prowess of the Zombie Centaur was even better than Dilan’s.

That was why she urged them to complete their preparations.

Dilan noticed that quite easily and realized the intentions behind her words.

Thus, he nodded his head before approaching the revolving door.

“Let’s go then.”

Ailee was able to fight on her own and look after herself as the entire first floor had been cleared by them.

It might be a little bit rude of him to leave her all alone, but Ailee had to live with this for now.

He gave her the remaining Claws of the War Krendel, and she had to do the rest all by herself because only she would know how to manufacture proper arrows.

That was something she was taught by the memories of her passive ability.

Once they were outside the hospital, Dilan took a few deep breaths. He kept walking and reached the short stairways that led down and towards the other side of the parking lot.

Seeing all the cars, Dilan couldn’t help but throw a weird look.

“I almost forgot that we are still in the same world as before...”

Before the Primordial Ascension, people would have called him crazy or delusional for such a comment, but Kathrine nodded her head.

“It feels weird, right?” She looked back at the hospital, or to be precise at the tower where she wanted to be right now.

A frown appeared on her face, and a moment later Oliver caught up to them.

“Are you guys sure that it’s fine to leave Ailee alone?” His voice sounded uncertain as he flicked his eyes from Dilan to Ailee. A trace of worry was mixed in his expression as well.

Seeing this, Kathrine’s worry dissipated for a moment as she smiled lightly after seeing Oliver’s reaction.

In the beginning, she had been pretty sure that Oliver was more of a coward than others, and that only the mysterious energy of the Essence crystals provided him with enough bravery to start fighting.

As such, it was a slight surprise for her to see that he was openly showing his worry for her.

‘He must like her a lot.’

Dilan thought the same, which made him shake his head.

“If you are worried about her, stay by her side, and help her. Nobody is forcing you to follow us. In fact, in the new Era you should just do whatever you want!”

As an afterthought, he wanted to add that he should do whatever he wanted, with the exception of betraying them, or acting like a lovesick fool, who would do something beyond stupid for someone else.

However, after giving it a second thought, Dilan held back.

He waved his hand, asking Oliver to go, before turning around.

A few seconds later he heard the retreating footsteps of Oliver and Ailee.

“You’re much nicer than I expected!” Kathrin suddenly remarked before pointing at a specific direction in the outskirts of the small city, Rian.

“We can search for and hunt the animals that escaped the Zoo. This would provide us with the most Status points owing to the high variety of mutated animals.”

It didn’t look like Kathrine wanted to talk about her earlier remark on Dilan’s nature.

As such, Dilan only looked at her for a moment before shaking his head.

‘I am nice? What an oddball’

Dilan was pretty sure that he was anything but nice.

Even his friends faced issues coping with his personality.

As such, he had never expected someone to call him a nice person.

Completely thrown off-guard, Dilan just nodded his head and agreed to go to the zoo instead of the mountainside.

Not only was the mountainside much closer, but the number of opponents they would have to face was bound to be less.

However, that was not something he realized for now.

And even if he were to realize it, Dilan was not the one, who had problems facing numerous opponents at the same time.

Chapter 54 Outside

The number of zombies crowding the streets was surprisingly low.

On the other hand, most streets were littered with the remains of their corpses.

It looked like quite a few of them had been eaten based on the mangled bodies scattered all over, and the few zombies they saw were definitely higher leveled.

Most of the ordinary zombies had already attained an Agility of two points or higher!

This was quite the surprise, but not even the tip of the iceberg.

After spending half an hour walking through the outskirts of Rian, Dilan felt that they had already come across more than fifty high-leveled monsters, with at least 10 monsters that seemed to be on par with the War Krendel.

Dilan was eager to hunt down all of them because it looked like most of them were of a different type.

They seemed to have evolved in specific paths such as focusing on one particular stats in the Log of the Ancient.

He presumed that this was their way of evolving; focusing on one trait that would become their first or possibly only development path.

Of course, he had no idea if this was the truth, but it seemed like this was the case as nearly all ordinary zombies had similar traits.

The Agility-focused zombies' skin was slowly taking on a blueish color.

It was not comparable to the Mutated Swiftiness Zombie, which was quite easy to perceive owing to the difference in the darkness of the blue skin color..

Thus, Dilan grew certain that they were Agile zombies.

Observing the zombies around them, one could tell that the outskirts of Rian were already more dangerous than what they had been facing inside the Rian mountainside hospital.

"Looks like all kinds of existences are eager to procure Essence crystals..."

Kathrine just nodded her head. She had already noticed that the zombies inside the hospital were weaker than the ones she had encountered on her way here.

"I noticed that already before. Looks like the zombies inside the hospital are just underdeveloped and weak because they don't attack each other."

By sharing their assumptions, they had figured out quite a lot about the given situation.

And considering that more humans lived in the center of the city, there might also be stronger zombies that they had yet to come across.

After all, humans possessed their very own Essence crystal.

This was something Dilan was certain of as he had observed a few corpses all around them intently.

If humans didn't turn into zombies after being scratched, there were always bite and claw marks on their heads.

That was if their head was still attached to their body and not bitten off by some vicious monster.

It was always the same part of the brain that had been damaged, whether it were zombies, humans, or other kind of existences.

But that was only logical because the Essence crystal of all existences was always at the same location!

Neither Dilan nor Kathrine were in a rush and they took their time while calmly walking through the surrounding area.

Even if the hospital had low-leveled zombies, there were a few cannibalists and mutated ones among them.

This meant that they were feeding on their own kind, or used their uniqueness to level up faster than others.

Thus, it was quite interesting to see that not a single existence that was stronger than the War Krendel could be found around them.

"Let's just start our hunt while approaching the Zoo. I really doubt that we will find a variety of mutated animals in the next few hours.

We should use the zombies, and Mythical beasts around us to level up, and gain a few more Status points."

Kathrine had thought about the same before already, but she felt as if they required more than just a few monsters in order to defeat the Zombie Centaur.

Her gut feeling told her so, only for her eyes to look towards the sky and locate the sun.

'It will be afternoon soon, and the generator in the hospital has stopped working...'

Kathrine would have to make use of the last sun rays to reach the fourth floor, or she would be forced to go out in the dark.

The latter would kill her, which meant Kathrine had to wait for the next morning if they didn't reach the hospital before sunset.

Thus, she nodded her head without too much of a thought.

However, just at this moment, a huge group of reptilian human-like monsters appeared around the corners of a huge building complex.

They were less than a meter tall, had scaled skin that had different shades of colors.

Some were of reddish-brown, pitch-black color while others had a burnt orange shade. A few had dark red eyes.

Each of them had short stick-like legs, long, clawed fingers and a jaw like that of a crocodile!

“Kobolds?” Dilan instinctively blurted out, not even sure if he was correct while trying to assess their strength.

All of them were wielding different types of weapons and most of them were smeared with blood or other liquids.

Their movements were smooth, which attracted his interest as well.

Without thinking too much about it, he caught hold of Kathrine’s clothes and pulled her towards the right.

Only when they reached the closest building’s walls did Dilan calm down a bit.

His eyes were fixated on the Kobolds, just for Kathrine to mumble quietly beside him,

“There should be around four different types of Kobolds, and their leader must be a Bronze monster, right?”

Dilan agreed without moving an inch, as he kept staring at the group of 30 monsters. They slowly inched their way towards the other side of the building, while keeping an eye on the kobolds.

Wanting to get away as soon as possible, they jumped on top of the cars that had been left behind in the middle of the street.

Some zombies were stuck in a few abandoned and crashed cars and did nothing except growl as they heard the noises which the Kobolds made.

But it was just as the first Kobold walked past these cars that the rest of them thrust their spears in the cars.

Their speed was rapid, and it was quite evident that they were familiar with the weapons they wielded.

As such, it was not astonishing to see that each attack pierced through the head of the zombies they targeted.

The Kobolds growled out aggressively, as they kicked and stomped their way into the car where they devoured the Essence crystals of the unlevelled zombies they had just killed.

From the looks of it, they made use of every last ounce of Essence.

Their delight while absorbing Essences was clearly noticeable, and one could easily figure that they were already addicted to the sensation.

Maybe this would have interested Dilan as it helped him figure out more about the wild behavior of other socializing races.

However, right now, it was not exactly important as Dilan chose to pick the group of Kobolds as his opponents.

“Just attack from the side, and pay attention to the surrounding beasts. Don’t worry about accidentally hitting me while shooting your bolts of lightning. Stay focused and everything will work out!”

Dilan's command was simple. There was not much for Kathrine to change in her fighting stance, which was why he moved the moment he finished his words.

"Take care of yourself!" She quickly mumbled, just for Dilan to wave off her concern.

"Of course, I will take care of myself, I don't plan to die! And I told you that I'll help you to defeat the monster on the third floor. Don't worry too much!"

A moment later, his demeanor changed completely. His speed accelerated all of a sudden and he simply kept running alongside the building's wall.

Only when he had put more than a hundred meters between himself and Kathrine did he change his direction.

A thunderous sound echoed around him, and currents of electricity shrouded his feet as his Agility shot up to reach [8.5].

Pushing his feet off the ground with all his might, Dilan shot towards the broad street that the group of Kobolds used nonchalantly.

The moment the booming noise of the [Thunder Step] ability resounded through the entire street, the Kobolds turned their heads in unison.

However, despite being an aggressive race, they couldn't even declare war against Dilan as they saw a pair of frosty eyes staring at them...eyes that had witnessed the end of the lives of countless beings!

Chapter 55 Killing machine

With his terrifyingly high speed that was even higher than the average human before the Primordial Ascension by several times, Dilan emerged in front of the closest Kobold.

Its scales were reddish-brown and were gleaming in the afternoon sunlight.

However, those proved to be futile against Dilan. With shocking speed, he lunged out at the Kobold.

But instead of trying to pierce through its head using the razor-sharp Clawed Gloves, Dilan's hand reached out for the Kobold's neck.

Holding it with an iron grip, each claw on the glove pierced into the Kobold's neck, causing a severe amount of bleeding.

Just a moment later, Dilan inserted a trace of mana into the right glove, increasing its endurance and sharpness.

Through this, and Strength that was five times higher than the average human, Dilan killed his opponent.

The sound of bones breaking reached his ears as he snapped the Kobold's neck.

The Kobold had not even been able to pierce out with the tightly clutched spear before its life was taken away and its grip on the spear loosened.

Dilan just smiled at this, before he hurled the dead body into the most crowded area of charging Kobolds.

None of the Kobolds had expected Dilan to be able to kill one of them so easily.

But this was not enough to be vigilant against him as the Kobolds' wild instincts showed the deepest hatred towards him..

They were not able to hold back in at all and charged toward him with their highest speed.

Because of that, the Kobold leader reached Dilan first, showing him an ugly grimace as it attacked with the longsword it wielded.

Its speed was, at least, on par with Dilan's when the [Thunder Step] ability was not activated.

Unfortunately, there were still two seconds left before he would have to supply one more unit of mana to the ability to keep it sustained.

His higher Agility and speed made it possible for him to twist his body and evade the longsword.

Turning around to face the Kobold yet again, he lifted his hands holding the Kobold's spear in order to block the sword slash, but Dilan changed his move in a fraction of a second.

He couldn't risk losing the weapon, or his hands, and he didn't know the extent to which the Clawed Gloves would protect his hands, after all.

Cutting through the air, the Kobold's sword whooshed past him as a small breeze brushed into his brown hair, while Dilan kicked hard at the sword arm.

This was everything his higher speed was able to accomplish.

However, it was more than enough as a bolt of lightning lightly grazed his face.

Little currents of electricity burned his cheek, before hitting the Kobold leader's lower body.

The Lightning strike Kathrine had fired pierced through the Kobold's abdomen and tore out of its body at a terrific speed before hitting one of the Kobolds that were extremely close to the Kobold leader.

'Good job, girl!' Dilan appraised her attack in his head before he regained his composure.

Yet, instead of continuing to deal with the Kobold leader, or to use the Trash+ graded spear, Dilan threw it toward the Kobold leader with all his might.

The Bronze monster was currently facing other problems than Dilan, which distracted it for a moment.

Its stance had been inconvenient while the gaping hole in its abdomen worsened the entire situation.

Staggering back due to the pain that shot up from its abdomen, the Kobold leader clutched its stomach. Dilan saw his opportunity and threw his spear towards it, the Kobold leader was too late to react.

Piercing straight through the left side of its chest, the spear halted only after the entire tip disappeared within the monster's body.

Knowing that the monster was done for, there was no need for Dilan to focus on the Kobold leader anymore.

Dilan's attention switched to the other Kobolds that were ready to attack him using various melee weapons.

However, Dilan was not afraid of them because he had already finished his analysis of their Agility and Strength.

With that in mind, he used up one more unit of mana to prolong the effect of the [Thunder Step] ability, and simultaneously inserted some mana in both of his Clawed Gloves.

There were still more than two dozen Kobolds left, and Dilan was the last one to rely on someone else to kill all of them.

He was hellbent on killing every single Kobold with his own hands.

Thus, he catapulted himself ahead while leaning forward.

Dilan's head nearly touched the ground for a moment, just for a cold and wild glint to manifest in his eyes as he tore open the throat of the Kobold he emerged in front of.

His high Agility and Strength made things much easier, even more so with the use of a powerful ability and useful equipment.

The Clawed Gloves made things so much easier.

Though he was enjoying the killing, some part of him was beginning to nag him, telling him that he was slowly transforming into a bloodthirsty monster; a beast that knew nothing but how to use its body to kill.

It was a creepy feeling.

Unfortunately, this was not the worst because Dilan didn't dislike the feeling when his hands sensed how each of his attacks deprived his opponent of their lives.

Shivers ran down his spine, while a maniacal excitement gleamed in his eyes.

Just a moment later two bolts of lightning shot through the most crowded area of the Kobolds, killing a total of five at once.

Two more were severely injured, but Dilan simply ignored them as he ended the lives of the other Kobolds first.

He didn't even bat his eyelid when blood splattered on his face, which made it seem as if he was a machine with the sole aim to kill.

Was this really the case? Was Dilan slowly turning into a killing machine that was devoid of any emotions?

For a few seconds, he felt as if he didn't know this Dilan, and stood frozen on the spot while the battle came to an end.

It was as if somebody reached into his mind and switched off a button.

His entire demeanor returned to normal in an instant. Dilan looked around to see if the Bronze Kobold leader was truly dead.

A mere glance was enough to tell him that. Afterward, he turned in all directions to see if monsters were attacking them.

But there were none from the looks of it.

Calmly bending down after he ensured that there were no monsters, Dilan pulled the Essence crystals out of the monsters he killed.

Meanwhile, he ignored the Bronze monster for the time being as he was not sure what Kathrine had planned.

But she didn't even take a glance at the Kobold leader and instead made her way towards the Kobolds her bolts of lightning had killed.

She ambled towards her target and absorbed every Essence crystal the moment she came in touch with it.

Kathrine moved with a hunter-like grace; relaxed but watchful and alert.

Thus, she was done even before Dilan had pulled out all the Essence crystals. He didn't absorb them yet, but that was mostly because he would level up.

And leveling up felt a little bit weird while moving around.

It was nothing serious, just a weird, itching sensation in his mind.

Thus, he didn't expect to see a Bronze Essence crystal flying toward him the moment he turned to Kathrine.

As he was holding more than a dozen Essence crystals in his arms, he was unable to catch it.

It hit him straight on his face, just to fall in the small batch of other Essence crystals.

Seeing the way he scrunched his nose, Kathrine tried her best not to laugh out.

'So that's funny?...'

Chapter 56 Captain's Sword

It took Kathrine quite a while to calm down.

On the other hand, Dilan just squinted his eyes as he threw a glance at the Bronze Essence crystal of the Kobold leader.

Clearly understanding what he was thinking about, Kathrine turned serious.

"You take the Bronze Essence crystal!"

She was not even thinking about taking the Bronze Essence crystal for herself.

Dilan would have to face the Zombie Centaur all by himself, which meant that he needed to be the strongest.

After all, it was highly likely that they would be scratched the moment they reached the Zombie Centaur's proximity.

With that in mind, Dilan's passive ability would have to make up for every single hit that he would be unable to evade.

And by comparing Dilan's current peak speed with that of the Zombie Centaur, Kathrine was actually not sure which of the two was faster.

However, the biggest issue was that Dilan couldn't maintain his peak speed for a long time, which meant that the fight had to end extremely quickly, or his stats had to improve!.

It was not difficult for him to perceive the meaning behind Kathrine's words.

As such, he didn't stand idly and quickly absorbed the 18 Essence crystals in his arms.

All of them crumbled at once and an intense stream of energy flooded into him.

[17 Essences of Tierless Level 7 Kobold Swordsmen & Spearmen have been absorbed → +1.4 Strength, +0.6 Health, +2.0 Stamina, +1.7 Agility, +0.9 Mana]

[<Bronze> Essence of a Tierless Level 9 Kobold Captain has been absorbed → +0.3 Strength, +0.2 Health, +0.7 Stamina, +0.5 Agility, +0.3 Mana]

[Essence pool has been filled. Host reached level 9! +0.5 Status points can be allocated!]

Dilan had expected more from the Bronze Essence, but he didn't fret about the points received.

Instead, he smiled faintly as he sensed that his Essence pool was almost filled once again.

'Fighting higher leveled monsters is truly much better...' He thought, only to avert his attention to the notification about the Bronze essence once again.

'Is it that low because I didn't kill it alone? Because my contribution in the entire fight was not that high?'

He was not actually sure about the correct answer, but it didn't really faze him.

Rather, it was a great piece of information, that accompanied the vast amount of Status points he gained.

The boost in Strength and Agility were the most important in his opinion as it elevated his combat prowess the most.

As such, he was hardly able to contain his smile as he gave Kathrine a peace sign.

"Looks like my Agility will be close to 11.5 units when I activate my active skill. That should be enough to evade the Zombie Centaur."

Even if Dilan was actually not sure if it was enough, he felt that searching for more monsters and killing them would take too long.

And given that Kathrine was impatient ever since their first meeting, it was better to go back now.

"I hope so..." Kathrine mumbled, only to turn in the direction they came from.

She was ready to leave, when she suddenly heard a rustling behind her.

Her head turned to Dilan, who picked up the Kobolds' weapons.

When Dilan noticed that she was just staring at him, he let out a disappointed sigh.

"How about you help me? These weapons are Trash+ graded, and their additional boosts are quite useful for new Ascenders!"

Kathrine just nodded her head before doing as asked.

Unfortunately, they couldn't carry all the weapons with them because they had simply too little space to store them away, and just two pair of hands to carry everything.

But that was fine because they were only in need of one weapon for each of the Survivors.

Even that was a lot because half of them were unwilling to fight.

However, Dilan expected many weapons to break in the near future, which was why he wanted to provide a wide variety of weapons to those who were willing to fight.

It didn't take long before he reached the Kobold Captain's corpse, and the longsword he wielded

[Captain's Sword] <Bronze treasure>

[1.0 Agility] Can pierce through the hide of most Tier-1 Level 0 monsters!

The Captain's Sword was quite a decent treasure, and it had a decent length of more than one meter.

It was not perfect in terms of length, but Dilan felt that this weapon was slightly more compatible with him than the Reinforced Stone Spear he was wielding earlier.

'If I face only one opponent or a small number of monsters, I can use the longsword, and if there is a huge horde of lower-leveled monsters, I can use the Clawed Gloves.'

Dilan felt that this was the best way for him to solve his current predicament. Even if a longsword was great to fight large numbers of opponents, he couldn't help but think that the Clawed Gloves were still slightly better.

He didn't want to face the Zombie Centaur just with his bare hands, which meant that the Captain's Sword was the best he could make use of for now.

Furthermore, if he switched between using the effects of both the longsword and his Clawed Gloves, it might even be possible to use them in alternation and perfect sync!

His eyes gleamed at the thought of utilizing both the Strength boost of his Clawed Gloves, and the Agility boost of the Captain's Sword.

Thus, he wielded the sword with one hand, moving it smoothly, while he carried almost a dozen weapons under his arms, squeezing them together.

“A spatial ring would be soooo nice,” Kathrine suddenly mumbled after more than 20 minutes of carrying around more than a dozen weapons in her arms.

Dilan needed to have one arm free to fight monsters if some were to suddenly pop up, but that was not the case for her.

She could just use her ability at will, and lash out from every direction she wanted to!

As such, her arms began to cramp after 20 minutes, and she couldn’t help but curse the unfair world.

However, Dilan just smiled before he said,

“I guess anything related to spatial devices is of a much higher grade than bronze. In my opinion, an enlarging backpack might be relatively easier to find.”

In the end, he just shrugged his shoulders, before quieting down.

It was unlikely for them to find any proper storage devices in the next few days.

Maybe, the only place where they could get one was inside the Permanent Gates.

Dilan predicted that there might be quite a few treasures if the insides were exactly what he presumed; a restricted, and isolated plane or dimension!

Chapter 57 Zombie Centaur

It was only 3 pm in the afternoon when they arrived in the cafeteria.

Quite a few things seemed to have changed, but nothing was exactly noteworthy enough for Dilan to feel excited about it.

A batch of arrows was lying on the ground next to Ailee, and there didn’t seem to be much more for her to do.

She was satisfied with the way her arrows had turned out, which was why she looked at them fondly.

Dilan averted his attention from her after he saw this, and his eyes flitted to the food.

After eating a few plates of food, Dilan focused his mind on recuperating his mana.

Before fighting the Zombie Centaur he would have to be at his best in every aspect.

As such, his mana had to be fully replenished.

This took a mere hour, which was also enough for Dilan to get used to wield the longsword that had belonged to the Kobold Captain.

It was much better to fight than initially expected.

Thus, he was confident to defeat the Zombie Centaur, which was why he went toward the cafeteria’s doors the moment he was prepared for the face-off.

Oliver and Ailee were also ready, along with Kathrine, who rushed towards him the moment she saw that he was ready to depart.

Her entire body was taut as wire due to the tension, and the others noticed that as well.

Dilan was just smiling faintly before adjusting a few things that were attached to the backpack before he walked outside the cafeteria.

Taking a second glance at the Log of the Ancient, he added a few more bonus points which he was planning to receive through specific meanings...

The final result was reassuring, and he climbed up the stairs all the way to the second floor without any hesitation.

No horned rat or Krendel could be spotted or heard around them.

This was a little bit weird, but none of them could focus on this as everyone's attention was fixated on the stairway that led to the third floor.

Reaching the fourth floor after the Zombie Centaur was defeated shouldn't be too difficult as the location of the stairs was known.

Ignoring the possibility of further problems that he might run into, Dilan reached the third floor that was lit up brightly, unveiling every corner of the room.

Thus, he could easily distinguish the Zombie, whose entire body was made out of dozens of zombies as if they had merged into one existence.

The lower body of the 2.5-meter-tall zombie was that of a horse, while its upper body was a zombie with four arms.

Dilan was not even sure how many corpses had been devoured in order to create the tightly compressed construct of the Centaur's shape.

However, it was terrifying enough for each of them to understand that defeating the beast wouldn't be as easy as expected.

This got even worse when Dilan noticed that the Zombie Centaur saw him the moment he emerged from the stairways.

The Zombie Centaur issued a weird mix of growling noises before it retreated a few steps.

Its hooves clopped against the floor as it charged toward him, and its speed gave the monster a huge disadvantage.

Not only was Dilan yet to reach the third floor completely, but his position prevented him from reaching his maximum possible speed from a standstill.

Dilan clearly understood this, which was why he ignored the others' existence for a moment.

He activated the [Thunder Step] ability with the Captain's Spear chosen as his weapon.

Thus his Agility shot up to 12.7 all of a sudden.

Catapulting himself towards the Zombie Centaur, Dilan could tell that his speed was higher than that of his opponent.

However, that was the only trait of his he presumed to be higher because he noticed something that made him worry.

'The Zombie Centaur's lower and upper body are not in sync but are acting separately? Am I fighting one or two opponents right now?!'

Dilan was confused, but he had no time to think about the answer as he shot forward.

Faint currents of electricity shrouded his feet as he turned into a flash of lightning that would zoom through the air in the blink of an eye.

Within a single second both Dilan and the Zombie Centaur clashed against each other.

While Dilan slashed out with the Captain's Sword, the Zombie Centaur seemed to rely on its lower body to initiate the first attack.

Attempting to run over Dilan, the monster used its heavy weight and high speed to its advantage.

It emerged right in front of him, forcing Dilan to retreat.

But that was not exactly difficult as his flexibility and high Agility didn't let him be overwhelmed.

However, what bothered Dilan was the fact that the counterattack, which followed suit, didn't work at all!

While evading the Zombie Centaur's charge, he had slashed out with the Captain's Sword.

It was able to pierce through the hide of Tier-1 Level 0 monsters, but what Dilan could inflict on the Zombie Monster was but a mere scratch.

Even if the first layer of the Zombie Centaur's defense was not particularly thick, it looked like its lower body was far stronger than any beast he had ever encountered.

This made things certainly more difficult, and it forced Dilan to retreat.

Turning around without losing its tremendous speed, the Zombie Centaur didn't take all that long to charge at him for the second time.

However, this time, the Zombie Centaur's upper body leaned forward, all four of its arms wide open and ready to lunge out at Dilan and tear him apart.

It was quite obvious that the monster was not playing around, but neither was Dilan!

While the Zombie Centaur had turned around, Dilan had already gulped the contents of the Vial of Strength, providing him with a boost of [+5 Strength] for 30 seconds!

In the beginning, Dilan had hoped that it would be possible to fight the Zombie Centaur using his usual tactics and not be forced to use the Vial of Strength.

But a single clash had been enough for him to understand that it was necessary for him to go all-out!

Rather than being severely injured, or possibly dying by saving the resources for later, it was more important to use them and survive, even if that meant he had to use precious treasures.

This was also the reason why Dilan got his hands on another Vial and consumed it without hesitation.

[Risk taker] <Trash+> treasure

Can be consumed once.

Enhances all stats by 10% for 10 seconds. Weakening of all stats by 20% for 10 minutes after the buff wears off!

Advantageous effects were considered as buffs, which meant that he would get a debuff, also called as a disadvantageous effect, after only 10 seconds.

This debuff would weaken him for 10 minutes, which meant that he had to win the battle before the 10 seconds ended.

It was a risky tactic to make use of the Vial that he had just consumed, but the moment he saw the Zombie Centaur, it was obvious that this was a type of monster he couldn't face with his current stats.

And that was even though his current stats were already extremely high.

However, this was not everything Dilan had done in order to increase his strength.

Before consuming the Risk-taker potion, Dilan used the remaining 15 Status points he had received by leveling up.

As such, his current stats were extremely high, with his raw Agility stat having reached a round figure of [10].

With all boosts, he was close to an Agility that was 15 times higher than the average human before the Primordial Ascension!

Thus, Dilan knew that 10 more points were more than enough for him to be able to do everything he needed to.

Just at this moment, a bolt of lightning shot out from the stairs that connected the second and third floor.

It was Kathrine's Lightning strike ability, which she had fired, just to pierce into the Zombie Centaur's back.

A large hole could be seen in the zombie's back, but that was the only indication that she had attacked the monster.

The Zombie Centaur didn't even flinch despite the gaping hole that tore out a significant chunk of its flesh.

It kept moving, like a predator, its eyes glued on Dilan.

But that didn't scare Dilan as he shot forward.

With the Captain's Sword pulled back and raised high in the air, Dilan was ready to use all his might to kill the Zombie Centaur.

Thus, when his eyes began to gleam brightly, and his movements became smoother all of a sudden, he decided to tolerate being scratched to let the Zombie Centaur come a bit near him.

It was not as if he would die from a single scratch, to begin with.

Taking that into consideration, Dilan shot ahead.

He evaded the four arms of the Zombie Centaur when they reached out for him.

This required him to twist his body at an uncomfortable angle repeatedly and jump upward and sideways to not get caught in its hold.

A moment later, he noticed that his robe was cut through.

Unfazed by it, he used all his might to slice off the head of the Zombie Centaur.

Or at least, that was what he planned.

All of a sudden, the Zombie Centaur stopped abruptly as its hooves screeched against the hospital floor in an attempt to prevent Dilan's blade from beheading itself.

Just a small part of its head was cut open from the side as Dilan's blade narrowly missed hitting it accurately, revealing its brain and the Bronze Essence crystal.

The definitive crack of its bones breaking and crushing under its weight and the jerk they could not sustain owing to its sudden halt, made the Zombie Centaur momentarily lose its balance.

'Its speed should be much slower now!! I can just cut off its arms and then finish it off!!' He thought, just to hear a sudden voice from further away.

"Move back!!" Ailee suddenly screamed a warning at top of her lungs as a bluish hue shimmered faintly around her eyes, "It has two actively working brains, not one!"

Chapter 58 Teamwork

Because Ailee was an archer, she was the one to receive the [Higher Vision(Passive)] ability crystal of the old nurse.

That allowed her to see the otherwise imperceptible movements near the Zombie Centaur's rotten head.

It was a second brain that seemed to pulsate, which was quite odd for an undead to possess.

A bad feeling had overcome her when Dilan had attacked, which was why Ailee urged him to retreat as quickly as possible.

Under normal circumstances, Ailee would never say something during a fight unless it was absolutely necessary.

As such, the moment Dilan heard her voice, he changed his trajectory immediately.

Twisting his body midair, he swung around and one of his feet touched the body of the Zombie Centaur.

Kicking hard, he catapulted himself away from the monster.

He crashed to the ground, and nearly lost his grip on the longsword.

But he had not broken any of his bones, which was a relief.

After a fraction of a second in which he regained his senses, Dilan pushed himself off the ground and forward.

Even the Zombie Centaur lunged forward and one of its arms lunged out to reach for him.

He knew that it was impossible to evade the attack as he could see its fist smash into his jaw...

Wanting to block off the attack, Dilan lifted the longsword that clashed with its arm.

With the flat side of the longsword in between the Zombie Centaur's arm and his unprotected body, Dilan tried to overwhelm his opponent but it used its brute force to push him back in no time.

Dilan's feet were being forcefully dragged back despite him trying to overwhelm the Zombie Centaur when suddenly it closed its fingers around Dilan's sword, tightly gripping the sword blade.

'It wants to disarm me?' Dilan wondered, just to see that this was not the case as the other arms of the monster shot out at him.

Its sole goal was to prevent Dilan from moving.

His opponent aimed to not only block him but not give him any room to move. Dilan had two choices; either he could try to endure the attacks and find an opportunity to retaliate, or to let go of the Captain's Sword!

With five seconds left in his strongest state, he shot forward half a meter before he jumped with all his might.

Both of his arms were tightly holding onto the longsword as he propelled himself into the air.

In the blink of an eye, the longsword's blade cut into the fingers of the Zombie Centaur, slicing them off neatly.

In order to use the longsword properly, enough speed and strength were required, thus after replacing his weapon's effect with the Clawed Gloves, he received the boost in strength that he had required.

Using his already higher Agility to his advantage, Dilan slashed out with the longsword once again.

He was still mid-air and within the reach of the Zombie Centaur but that did not bother him as he cut through the arm that was the closest to him.

At the same time, he felt that his legs had been scratched.

But instead of taking a look at his legs, a single glance towards the Log of the ancient showed him the number of zombie scratches and bites he endured.

[0/4]

Seeing that he had already used up every single chance to be scratched, Dilan frowned before catapulting himself ahead the moment he landed on the ground.

When Ailee had told him that there were two active brains in the Zombie Centaur's body he had shot her a disbelieving look.

However, the more intently he looked at his opponent, the more obvious the location of the second actively working brain became.

As such, he knew that the longsword was the key to finishing the fight against the Zombie Centaur.

With that in mind, Dilan ignored everything else as he pierced the longsword straight through the chest of the monster.

Its tough upper 'horse' body and thick hide was hard to penetrate, but Dilan exerted his physical strength to the limits to cut through its highly resistant and defensive physique.

Having coated the longsword's blade with more than one unit of mana, Dilan kept pushing it harder and could tell that he reached the designated target.

The blade had finally pierced through the second brain.

A moment later, when he knew that his attack had been successful, he reluctantly let go of the Captain's sword as he threw himself towards the right.

Merely a fraction of a second later, the remaining three arms of the Zombie Centaur slashed at the location he had been standing a moment ago.

It was certainly advantageous for Dilan's speed to be so high right now.

However, even then, he couldn't help but feel that it would be close to impossible to finish the Zombie Centaur in the next three seconds...at least if he were to be alone.

Fortunately, that was not the case as two Lightning strikes shot through the hall of the third floor.

Kathrine had taken her time to change her position, and aim accurately before shooting out.

After all, Dilan was unlikely to be able to hold the attention of the Zombie Centaur for more than 10 seconds!

With that in mind, Kathrine had given her best.

And it was exactly because of this fact that her two shots pierced through two of the monster's upper arms, tearing them off as if the pages of a notebook would be forcefully pulled off its binding.

Kathrine was not the only one to rush to his aid. Even Ailee decided to make use of the self-crafted weapons.

In no time, she had already knocked her newly manufactured arrow on the Cold-Steel bow.

Ailee pulled back the bowstring completely, and her eyes began to gleam faintly, just for the air around her to turn eerily cold as she let go of the bowstring.

She shot the arrow at the Zombie Centaur, aiming for the huge cut in its head.

Dilan had created a perfect opportunity for her, and Ailee wanted to make use of this.

As such, she overcame her fear when the Zombie Centaur moved to look at her with its eyes filled with wrath and her arrow pierced into the Zombie Centaur's head.

Yet, instead of being overjoyed, Ailee's face paled the moment she let go of the bowstring.

"I missed"

Even before Ailee had said it out loud that she had missed, Oliver had rushed out. He had perceived that something had been gone wrong with her shoot and that it was on him to do something.

Thus, he used all his strength and the [Violent Strike] ability in order to slash at the Zombie Centaur's arm that was about to reach Dilan.

Dilan would have been a fraction of a second late to get up from the ground, even with his high Agility stat.

His brain had required a short moment to perceive the situation as well, after all.

That meant, the fraction of a second would be more than enough for Dilan to be attacked, and to possibly die.

Under normal circumstances, Oliver wouldn't have moved, but it was his task to protect Dilan in the worst-case scenario.

And true to his job, Oliver had rushed to his aid after noticing that Dilan's robe was torn in two spots close to his right upper arm.

He saw that the edges around the torn area of the robe were gleaming in a faint blood-red hue.

Oliver saw exactly the same around Dilan's legs, a tiny spot where his tracksuit had been torn open on each leg.

Clearly recalling that Dilan's passive ability allowed him to be immune to zombie infections for a total of four scratches or bites, Oliver realized the obvious fact that the last arm of the Zombie Centaur would end Dilan's life as a human being!

A fierce desire to protect his friend and trusted ally flared in him and Oliver blocked the arm by slashing out as viciously as he could.

This was barely enough for him to get near Dilan, but he failed to block the attack perfectly.

The war dagger was stuck in the Zombie Centaur's arm, but that did little to deter their mighty opponent.

As such, the arm simply continued to reach for and grab Oliver, flinging him two meters through the air.

Once again, Oliver noticed that he was way too weak, and that he had to become more powerful, as quickly as possible!

Otherwise, he would die.

And it was at this moment that he saw how Dilan shot up from the ground, closing the distance towards the head of the Zombie Centaur in an instant as his hand shot forward to tear its brain apart.

Using his last remnants of mana, the Clawed Gloves' were sharpened drastically, piercing through the narrow gap of the Zombie Centaur's skull as if it was a piece of cake.

Just a moment later, Dilan noticed an itching sensation all over his body. His stats were drastically reduced in an instant.

This sudden feeling of weakness took him off-guard and he staggered back.

Losing his balance, he slumped to the ground and heard a deafening thud as the Zombie Centaur's heavy body followed suit.

'So strong...' Oliver could only be in awe, fully aware that both the Zombie Centaur and Dilan were existences far stronger than him.

Clenching his fist, he knew that it was time for him to buckle up, to face the dangers of the wide world if that meant that he would be able to become stronger!

Chapter 59 Chimera Zombie Centaur

After spending a few seconds on the ground to catch his breath, Dilan forced himself to get up.

He was still breathing heavily, and the debuff from 20% of his Stats felt far worse than expected.

It was a suffocating feeling and made him feel as if all the breath was knocked out of his lungs but he simply endured it.

There was nothing else he could do, either way.

Dilan had just begun to adjust to the weakness when he was hit with another bout of weakness. Even the effect of the Vial of Strength wore off. Dilan was pretty sure that 30 seconds had yet to pass, but when he looked around, he noticed that the others had gathered around him.

Kathrine was breathing heavily, and both her palms had been scorched severely.

It looked like she used some force in order to control the bolts of lightning, which allowed her to shoot with near-perfect aim.

Dilan was thankful for her assistance, which was why he nodded his head faintly.

Afterward, he loosened his backpack before taking out another Vial.

A liquid with a deep red tone could be seen within the transparent vial.

Handing it over to Kathrine, Dilan gave her a faint smile before suggesting,

"You should use it, otherwise, you might not be able to be ready for the fourth floor."

Dilan was not sure what exactly Kathrine was searching for on the fourth floor but that was not important as he made a prediction according to her actions since they met each other.

Furthermore, he owed her one for having been saved once..

Thus, he didn't bother too much about her reasoning to be desperate enough to reach the 4th floor.

With that in mind, it was always better to be in a peak condition when facing unknown, and possibly dangerous situations.

Thus, he gave her the <Potion of Revitalization>

It was one of the Trash+ treasures they had procured, and also the item which would be used as a last resort to treat a severe injury in the fight against the Zombie Centaur.

However, as nobody except Kathrine was gravely injured, she could simply use it.

“Let’s not use it...I will only need a few minutes before I am ready to go upstairs!” She suddenly announced, refusing to consume the potion, and instead, simply took a few heavy breaths.

Dilan was not sure how high Kathrine’s Mana stat was, but considering that Mana was the rarest stat one could procure by absorbing Essence crystals, Dilan was pretty sure that activating her ability three times in a row was too much.

“Take it!” He insisted while holding the potion in front of her again with a bit more emphasis, his expression clearly showing that he didn’t allow her to reject his ‘offer’.

Feeling too exhausted to even start arguing with Dilan, Kathrine accepted the Potion of Revitalization before gulping down the red liquid in one go.

It was extremely sweet and to the extent that she felt as if all the sugar in the world had been shoved down her throat.

However, Kathrine gulped it down at once with her eyes closed tightly.

When she opened her eyes once again, Dilan had already averted his attention.

Oliver picked up the Bronze Essence crystal of the Zombie Centaur, and simply handed it over to Dilan.

“All of us fought against the Zombie Centaur, so how do you guys want to continue?”

He asked his group so as to avoid conflict of interest. But, both Ailee and Oliver shook their heads immediately.

“I had only one job...and messed it up...” Ailee murmured, feeling bad about the arrow she shot. Even if her aim had not been a mile away from her target, she had missed it by a centimeter or two.

As such, her contribution to the battle was insignificant.

Dilan didn’t feel so because Ailee had warned them about the second Zombie brain.

But he didn’t say anything and allowed Oliver to sort it out.

“Well, I was just your shield. To be honest, I was the most useless today. I will do better next time. Just take the Bronze Essence crystal for yourself!”

Kathrine didn’t feel like she deserved the Bronze Essence crystal either as her only task had been tearing off two of the Zombie Centaur’s four arms!

Looking at the others’ generosity, Dilan couldn’t help but shake his head.

It was not as if he was against absorbing the Essence crystal, but if the three would continue to behave like this, they would never get greedy for power.

And that way, they wouldn't even try to become the most powerful.

The only positive fact was that it was great for his team members to be able to assess their individual contribution decently.

However, he didn't like the fact that all of them held back from demanding some things.

A certain degree of greed was necessary to become powerful, which was something Dilan understood quite well.

That was also why he found it useless to debate. Right now he was exhausted and would readily accept all the rewards that had no takers.

Hence, he simply absorbed the Essence out of the crystal.

In an instant, his being was flooded with tremendous amounts of energy that invigorated him at once.

[<Bronze> Essence of a Tierless Level 5 Chimera Zombie Centaur has been absorbed→ +1.4 Strength, +0.9 Health +1.2 Stamina, +1.3 Agility, +0.4 Mana] 5 Status points

[Essence pool has been filled. Host reached level 10! +0.5 Status points can be allocated!]

The Chimera Zombie Centaur, which was its correct name, provided him with far more status points and Essence than he had expected.

Other than leveling up and reaching level 10, he felt as if his Essence pool was overflowing with Essence once again!

This astonished him a little bit, and he couldn't help but look at the other notifications that were unveiled to him.

[Level capacity for Tierless entity has been reached! Ancient Paths of Advancement have been unveiled!]

Dilan had been expecting something similar, which was why he was not further shocked.

It was similar to quite a few games, where one gained an Occupation after reaching Level 10.

Thus, he wanted to take a look at all available occupations.

However, even before he could take a proper look, Kathrine chose to make her way toward the fourth-floor.

She was sure that some Zombies on the third floor would soon reach their location.

That was if there were some zombies left on the third floor to begin with.

But even if there were none, she didn't want to waste more of her precious time.

Seeing that Kathrine was already on the move, Dilan averted his attention as well.

'I can just take a look at it later. It's not as if I'm in a hurry right now!'

Without hesitation, he followed Kathrine up the stairs.

It was quite odd but Dilan didn't think that they would encounter any kind of overly powerful monster on the fourth floor.

Somehow, the Chimera Zombie Centaur was likely to have been the strongest of the monsters they had fought.

That was why he didn't mind following Kathrine despite having a very low amount of mana and feeling beyond exhausted.

On the way, he picked up the Captain's Sword, pulling it out of the corpse of the Chimera Zombie Centaur.

Meanwhile, Oliver and Ailee decided to follow Kathrine and Dilan as well.

They didn't have something better to do either way, and their help might be needed, even if they were not sure about that.

The group of four people ended up forming a team once again and they reached the fourth-floor not long after.

While Kathrine looked in all directions trying to recall which path was the correct one, Dilan didn't take long to notice something.

'Corpses...'

The corpses of quite a few zombies were littered on the ground.

This was not a new sight for any of them.

However, according to the wounds all corpses had, they had been inflicted by something thin and sharp!

'Is there a Survivor with a sword?' Dilan wondered.

But before he could think further, Kathrine rushed off in one of the three hallways, forcing Dilan and the others to follow her.

Though they followed her, Dilan couldn't help but think that something was off.

And this weird feeling was proven correct when they reached a large intermediate hall.

There were more than 20 Survivors lying on the ground. They all looked haggard, with bloodstained clothes and injuries all over their bodies, making them look similar to a zombie.

"What the actual fuck...happened here?!" Oliver blurted out the moment he saw the Survivors, who he had literally assumed to be zombies!

"Mankind at its best, I guess..."

Chapter 60 Fourth floor's Survivors

“Mankind at its best, I guess...” Dilan mumbled as his attention fell on three women.

They were not malnourished, and looked perfectly healthy...if one were to only focus on their outer appearance.

Their eyes seemed soulless, their clothes were torn apart, revealing a lot of their skin.

Dilan knew that his first dreadful thought had been correct.

He looked at Kathrine who swept her eyes through the entire room within a second.

However, her expression didn't change at all. Only when Kathrine didn't find the person she had been looking for, did a deep frown appear on her face.

A trace of desperation filled her eyes before her attention was drawn to one of the hallways. There were more Survivors!

“Do you see this? That is what the Primordial Ascension does with the weak, and those that are unable to fight for themselves...” Dilan outstretched his hand forward while asking Ailee and Oliver.

His voice seemed ice-cold to both of them.

But the moment they turned their head away from the cruelty they witnessed, both Ailee and Oliver noticed that Dilan was not just frustrated, but even a little bit sad.

It was not that he had a heart made of stone, or that he lacked empathy.

As long as people receive the chance to fight for themselves, they should take it.

That was the most important fact in his opinion because there were too many people, who would betray one another just for some momentary gains..

Dilan had gone through this more often than he could wish for.

He felt that it was impossible to trust anyone 100% because something such as loyalty until death simply didn't exist!

And his past served as a glaring reminder for him to know that it was a superficial concept.

While Oliver and Ailee looked at Dilan, trying to figure out what was on his mind, Kathrine inched her way to a specific direction, where she heard the anguished cries of several women.

Dilan heard it as well, and he could already imagine what was going on.

It was quite obvious if one were to look at the few women that were in the hall, staring lifelessly into nothingness.

Only seven days had passed since the Primordial Ascension, but even then, the few humans that tasted power for the first time in their life had become greedy.

And this did not only include power, but also the greed to get women and to demonstrate their dominance.

Their carnal desires were unleashed, and nobody could stop them anymore.

Rules or morale lost their value in the face of anarchic power.

That was something the Survivors in the cafeteria had yet to realize because Dilan had provided them with a life much better than the vast majority of mankind was able to live at the moment.

Most humans were already happy to be alive right now as they had witnessed the dangers caused by the Primordial Ascension up close.

There were far more dangerous existences than zombies, such as mythical beasts, specific mutated animals, and the worst...humans!

Kathrine was sweating profusely when she approached the hallway where more than a dozen men were impatiently waiting in front of a particular room.

Dilan followed her while maintaining an iron grip on the Captain's Sword.

His eyes were on the dozen men, ready to attack if any of them were to lunge at them when he noticed that the first one laid his eyes on Kathrine.

"Ohhh, another beauty!! I've never seen you before. Are you also looking for our boss? If you want some food, I can give you some in exchange for...a night with you!"

One of the older men approached Kathrine with lust evident in his eyes as he spoke to her.

It was obvious what he was after, and a muscle in Dilan's jaw twitched. But a moment later, he began to move as well.

However, it was at this moment that a dazzling purple light emerged in Kathrine's hand.

Her face contorted in fury as she waved her hands around, reminding herself the reason she had faced all dangers for, the reason for her to enter the Rian mountainside hospital.

Anger and wrath consumed her as her mind went blank and she activated her active ability [Lightning strike].

A mere second passed before a bolt of lightning that looked almost like a lightning serpent shot out of her hand.

It pierced straight through the old man's heart, advancing ahead.

Another man had followed the old one the moment he saw Kathrine in the hopes of laying his hands on her as well.

And it was exactly this man, who was pierced by Kathrine's bolt of lightning as well!

Kathrine had yet to realize that she had killed two survivors in the blink of an eye. All her attention was focused on the door that was the closest to her.

She didn't even notice the horrified expressions of the surrounding men who had witnessed their comrades being killed as if they were tiny ants.

As such, Kathrine was also oblivious to the fact that she had turned everyone against her in a single act.

Rage and a glint of fear could be seen in the eyes of the young and old men, who wanted nothing more but to kill the young woman and prevent her from killing anyone else.

She had appeared out of nowhere and dared to kill their men, which gave them the right to do whatever they wanted with her, whether this was her death, or to take her by force!

This was at least what they thought.

However, even before they could attack Kathrine, a thunderous sound reverberated through the entire fourth floor, and a purple streak of light shot over the floor.

Within three seconds, Dilan passed through the group of 10 Ascenders, killing all of them with the Captain's Sword that was slick with blood.

Just a moment later, he saw that the last Ascender fell to the ground, bleeding severely.

The other Ascenders were already clutching their chest and taking their last breaths, trying in vain to utter inaudible words before they stopped twitching and lay motionless.

In the end, only one of the young Ascenders was left alive.

The young man, who was in his mid-20s was shivering, looking at Dilan as if he was the incarnation of the Devil.

Dilan had just killed nine men, in a matter of seconds, and his eyes were devoid of the slightest fear or hesitation!

The clearness and depth of Dilan's eyes were the most frightening because it was as if he felt no remorse about having killed humans!

"Be happy that you know how to behave." Dilan commented while the young man continued to tremble, the hairs on the back of his neck standing up.

He wanted to indicate to the young man that he left him alive for not showing the intention to kill Kathrine or the people behind her.

However, what the young man understood was that he could be lucky for not having taken one of the women by force.

Either way, he was happy to be alive and slumped to the ground because his legs couldn't endure the weight of the rest of his body anymore.

But it was just a moment later that his hand touched something warm when he had thrown his hands forward to not crash into the ground.

Despite knowing what his hand had touched, he had an irresistible urge to lift his hand and confirm his suspicion.

"Blood..." He mumbled in a horrified voice as he looked at his hand which was drenched in blood.

Turning his head, the young man saw all the dead bodies once again, which led him to vomit right in front of him.

Dilan couldn't even smile when he saw this.

Now, he was beginning to doubt if it was a good idea to leave this particular young man out.

After all, not radiating killing intent didn't mean that he had no ill intentions.

Yet, instead of focusing on the young man or the corpses littered across the floor, Dilan kicked open the door Kathrine had approached.

Her heart was beating rapidly, and she was praying to some God, hoping against hope that everything would be fine, only for Dilan to unveil the truth right in front of her.

The fact that he kicked open the door worked like a miracle for Kathrine as she was jolted back to reality.

She regained her senses when her eyes swept across the wide-open VIP room of the Rian mountainside hospital.

A gut-wrenching sight welcomed her in which several naked women were shivering uncontrollably. Four of them were crying bitterly in the corner of the room, trying to crouch behind each other and hide from being seen or touched.

Their bodies were covered in bloody red welts and angry scars, some fresh while some scabbing over as droplets of blood were oozing out of them.

'Sex slaves...' Dilan could only think, understanding that the worst possibility in his mind had come true.

There were even some young women in their early 20s or late teens that had been viciously abused as if a beast had clawed at them not long ago. They lay on the ground and were twitching in pain, and two of them were even unconscious.

A king-sized bed was located in the room, and three women were chained to it. A young and muscular man was standing in front of them, holding a reddish whip in his hand.

His naked body was revealed to everyone as well as his erection.

The moment Dilan took a look inside the room, he felt disgusted. Even if he had already presumed that some men would take women by force after the Primordial Ascension, Dilan didn't believe that things would go downhill so fast.

"Siss!!" The pained voice of an 18-years-old girl reached them, making them all look at the bitterly crying teenager.