Chapter 14: Moonlight in the city

The beast wanted to kill Azief.

No, it wanted to rip him into shreds. How dare an inferior life form rely on tricks to harm it. Its fury was uncontainable and leaked into the surroundings as a dark miasma.

Azief could also sense the beast's anger towards him, but thought that it worked in his advantage. However, he neglected to realize, that logic only applied to other humans. Humans could slip up due to their chaotic emotional state, but who knew if that applied to his current foe.

Azief attempted to distance himself once again, but the enraged beast became even stronger, its paw strikes were now accompanied with gusts of wind.

Azief was forced to jump to the walls of a neighboring house while the beast followed closely behind. With another strike the walls crumbled.

"Fuck! The beast's only growing stronger!" Azief couldn't help but to curse seeing the ever growing strength of the beast that defied reason.

The fight was slowly becoming more one-sided as he was forced to flee. Now it was not only the beast that was trailing him, but Tan and a slowly encroaching horde of zombies were behind him.

Determined to kill the human that injured it, the beast was now also using its tail as a whip which caught Azief unprepared. After being hit, he was thrown 5 meters away, crashing through a wall in the process. He felt as if a giant bashed him away with a sledge hammer.

Blood leaked out of his mouth and Azief knew that he had sustained a few internal injuries. This was the worst condition he had ever been in.

"Wait for me!" Tan yelled as he ran towards Azief to heal him.

Doing so, Azief's internal injuries began to recover while Tan was drained of nearly all of his SP. He then handed Azief a few potions to finish the job.

Time seemed to pause as both Azief and the beast stared at each other. It was only now that he was glaring at the beast did he notice that the end of its tall was shaped like that of an Ankylosaurus'—a mace.

Azief hadn't used all of his strength yet, but his vitality and stamina were decreasing speedily. If not for Tan's support, Azief would be dead by now. Wiping the blood from his mouth, he drew a terrifying visage. His face seemed almost to be contorted in an inhuman manner.

He didn't survive in a zombie infested area to be eaten by a fucking beast! He would survive!

He would live! He would thrive!

After suffering a setback his determination was reborn, and while looking at the beast an immaterial flame appeared in his eyes.

Such an action had surpassed the realm of bravery and transcended into the realm of foolhardiness.

But perhaps, in this new world, bravery wasn't enough. From now on a mixture of bravery and stupidity would be required.

Although Tan's heal had begun his recovery, Azief would need more if he wanted to return to his peak. And though he wanted to heal himself, in his current condition, doing so would far surpass the realm of stupidity and land him in a graveyard.

While Azief was just a step away from reaching level 20, the beast managed to force him to such a pathetic state.

If it was someone else in Azief's position, they probably would've already been chopped up and eaten by the beast which greatly surpassed the highest level human.

And although he did manage to inflict a single wound on the beast's hind legs it merely served to restrict the beast's speed.

They were circling each other in a deadlock when the beast broke it to lunge towards its adversary.

Azief dodged sideways, narrowly escaping, and activated his skill "Slashing Wind", increasing his strength and speed.

His buffs would only last for five minutes and he wouldn't be able to use the skill again because of its CD.

If he didn't win the fight within the next 5 minutes he wouldn't have another chance.

Bursting forward with a power that exceeded the limits of a human, he slashed at the beast.

His blade drew a half-moon shaped energy that slashed at the beast's front legs.

The energy was met with great resistance before it managed to cut a wound in the beast's steel-like muscle. Azief could only be awed at the beast's toughness.

The beast had also realized how dangerous its cornered prey was and grew even more incensed.

Once again roaring, it ignored its wounds and leapt towards Azief filled with killing intent.

Confronted with such a sudden burst of speed and power, Azief was pinned down by the beast, who smashed him to the ground.

He wanted to curse at the beast again, but before he could blood spurted from his mouth. The sound of bones cracking was heard, and the ground beneath him was cracked.

Tan could only watch the battle with trepidation and hope that Azief could win. If not, he too would become a meal.

Still, as a third party, he noticed something that Azief didn't. The bulge on the beast head. Could it be? Seeing that Azief pinned down, Tan realized that it might be their only chance. He yelled.

"The forehead, Azief! Smash its forehead!"

Hearing Tan's yells, Azief suddenly realized something. 'Is that it?' At this point, he was desperate enough to grasp any straws he was given. All he needed was a chance to fight back and he could live another day.

One chance.

Using all of the strength he could muster Azief punched the beast on its head. And crying in pain, the beast leapt back and released Azief from its clutches.

"HEAL!" Azief yelled at Tan while he drank some potions. His wounds began to close up once again.

The bulge! That was the beast's weak point! With this he could win. Azief, growing overconfident after learning of the beast's weakness, would soon realize why it was so dangerous to underestimate his enemy.

This beast wasn't just any regular beast.

Though meager, it still was somewhat intelligent.

Replaying the fight in its head, it realized that the only reason that its prey was still alive was the weaker human that it ignored. Changing its target, it lunged towards Tan without warning.

Azief was shocked. Tan was too far away and by the time he could get over to help it would be too late. Fuck!

With one great swipe of its paw, Tan's hand fell to the ground. If Azief didn't get there soon, he really would die.

Knowing this, Azief leapt forward and aimed his blade towards the beast's forehead.

As if through preternatural means, his speed reached new heights as he stabbed the beasts bulge spraying blood everywhere.

And in its death throes, the beast shrieked and tried to bring its killer down with it. Unfortunately, its attempts were futile as it collapsed in a puddle of its own blood before its mighty swipe could even touch a hair on Azief's head. NOvelnext.cOm

Taking advantage of the beast's weakened condition Azief stabbed it in all of its vitals until a notification appeared.

You have advanced to level 20 and earned 2 stats points. 5 additional stats points have been rewarded for being the 25th person in the world to reach level 25.

Skill points have been unlocked. Every time you level up, you will now be rewarded with stats and skill points.

"All to Vitality," Azief commanded. He now realized the true usefulness of vitality. Unexpectedly, another notification appeared:

Your Shadow Lord Set has absorbed enough souls to evolve 1 item. Which would you like to evolve?

"The Sharp Sword," Azief said absentmindedly as he saw Tan's wretched condition and rushed over.

The Sharp Sword has evolved to the Dark Sword Of Souls.

Dark Sword Of Souls

● Attack: 30-55

● Sneak Attack: 40-70

● Durability: 1220/1220

● Has the ability to evolve when it absorbs the required souls.

Azief didn't pay attention to the messages from the World Orb as he examined Tan's wounds. The blood near Tan's arms was turning black while his veins turned blue. Looking at these signs, Azief was certain Tan was infected.

Azief expression hardened. He knew what he had to do, but would he have the strength to do it?

"I'm infected aren't I?" Tan asked, seeing Azief's expression. Azief said nothing and only nodded.

Tan coughed and looked upwards bitterly. Before the fight began the dark clouds had blotted out the sky.

Perhaps it was fitting that they would go away after the fight had concluded and he was on the verge of death. Seeing the first rays of moonlight, Tan could only think one word: beautiful.

"Could you do something for me Azief?" Tan requested.

"Anything within my power."

"Get my wallet out from inside my left pocket. I want to see it."

This request baffled Azief, but he did it nonetheless.

"Open it…"

When Azief opened it, he realized there was a photo of a woman wearing a cheongsam.

Her beauty was juxtaposed by the bleakness of the black and white picture and the wear and tear it'd sustained over the years.

Showing the picture to Tan, he shed a couple tears of regret.

"I guess I'll never see her again…" Tan grieved.

After a few moments had passed, he stiffened his resolve, closed his eyes, and said, "Azief, cut off my head. I don't want to end up like them." He motioned into the distance at the approaching horde.

Azief nodded.

It wasn't an easy thing to do.

This was his first time killing a human being.

A human being that had just saved his life not minutes past. However, they didn't have a choice. The moment Tan was infected; he was destined to die.

"Make it quick." Tan pleaded.

"I will…"

Tan closed his eyes one final time and with one fell swoop, his head rolled from his body.

Azief quickly took all the items except for the robe.

Though it was a meaningless gesture, he didn't have the heart to leave Tan's naked corpse. If he was considered foolish for being sentimental in such a situation, then so be it!

He wasn't heartless quite yet.

Without looking back, he dashed away from the zombie horde by himself.

"Alone again…"

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Editor's Note: Though I'm not quite satisfied with how the dialogue turned out (as in my note in chapter 12), I'm pretty satisfied with how things turned out here. I think the fight scene and climax to the whole Tan Arc really panned out.