



In the mall, there was one survivor. It was a woman and she was currently sitting by herself in the dark. Her name was Sofia.

She was the only child of a poor family.

She didn't have enough money to further her studies and was stuck in a dead-end job just to pay the bills.

Her father was an abusive fuck who beat her and her mother within an inch of their lives.

Unable to stand it anymore, her mother divorced her father a long time ago. She was now 24 years old.

It was dark. And silent.

Although it was somewhat contradictory, the only words she could think to describe her current situation were: the darkness is blinding and the silence is deafening.

Oh and the smell. Or rather the stench. She couldn't stand the stench of death.

Still, she could only endure it. After all, her only alternative was to go outside and going outside to face the zombies meant death. Her death.

And so she endured the darkness. Endured the silence. And endured the odors.

Previously she had been scared half to death by the roars of some unknown beast that seemed to come nearer to her.

But now the silence was only interrupted by the occasional noises of a zombie. She almost preferred hearing the roars. If she did, at least she would know for certain if the beast was near her.

While she bided her time she would occasionally look outside, hoping. Hoping that there would be something to help her escape.

She knew she was safe where she was, but, at the same time, knew that it wouldn't last forever.

She would have to leave eventually.

However, for now, the mall was safe and where she would call her home for the foreseeable future.

Before the Fall, she and her boyfriend both worked in the mall.

She was a cashier and he was a guard.

It was thanks to her boyfriend that she hadn't made any dumb mistakes which resulted in her death.

Or rather it was due to the fact that he couldn't keep his mouth shut which resulted in her learning all about the mall's security.

The reason her survival was more due to his blabbermouth than to the person himself, was because he abandoned her in the mall a few days ago.

But it's not like she could blame him. He only did so after trying (and failing) to get her to run away with him. Why didn't she run?

Was it because she could predict that running outside would be riskier than staying put?

No. She wasn't a clairvoyant.

She was just too scared to move and was, therefore, left behind.

Then, in some strange twist of fate, her fear paid off as everyone who ran away was eaten by strange beasts.

She could do nothing but hide, praying the beasts wouldn't find her. She was lucky. The beasts quickly left after killing everyone that ran.

Getting out of her hiding spot, she assessed the situation and puked when she saw the mountain of corpses the beasts left behind.

The floor was now coated in slick blood. She would've puked again, but her stomach was already empty from last time.

Recalling what her boyfriend had told her, if she pressed a couple of buttons the mall would go into lockdown.

She had no other choice. She would rather spend time locked inside the mall with the corpses than to risk her life trying to flee.

That night, shocked at the events that transpired, she tried to take a nap to calm her nerves. And just as she was about to drift off to sleep, she heard a noise.

Looking at its origin she saw a shocking sight.

The dead bodies had got to their feet and started walking.

They were groaning and looked as if they had just gotten off the filming set of a zombie movie. Then, hearing a noise, they turned around towards Sofia.

They wanted to eat her.

At first she was terrified, but as they drew closer she realized that if she didn't do something she would end up like them.

She nocked an arrow using her bow and shot.

She had a clear talent and her bow handling was impeccable.

Each time an arrow took flight a zombie would collapse as an arrow appeared in the middle of its forehead.

And though she was scared, she couldn't tremble as trembling meant missing. And missing meant death.

She remembered that there were about 32 corpses. She'd have to kill 32 zombies.

It was 3 in the morning by the time she finished her cleanup.

She was exhausted, mentally and physically. Her finger was bleeding and her shoulder blade was sprained. All of her injuries were sustained in the course of her firing her bow.

Still, it was quite amazing that she managed to survive and even kill a mall full of zombies with just her bow and a quiver of arrows.

Solely relying on sneak attacks, she was able to get to level 7 and put all of her points into agility and a new stat called accuracy. She also learned a few skills as well as getting a storage ring. Quickly realizing its use, she stored everything into it. Gold coins, food, medicine. Anything she could find went into her ring.

Making sure that there weren't anymore threats, she was finally able to rest.

When she woke up the next day, she saw that there was a horde of zombies surrounding the mall.

She was too scared to even make a single sound. It had gotten to a point where she ate on the highest floor just to avoid detection from the sound of her chewing. This went on for what felt like an eternity.

Time passed and she continued waiting. It worked before, why wouldn't it work again? After all, she was only alive because she stayed in one place. More time passes as the hours blurred into one big conglomerate.

Back to the present, she was sitting in the dark, alone with her thoughts. Her boyfriend was dead. Hell, most of the people in the world should've died if this disaster wasn't just regional. Thinking about it further, she realized that her mother was also most likely dead.

'No! There's no way she died!' She stubbornly grasped onto that one grain of hope. She could accept it if anyone else died, but her mother?

The only one who truly cared for her? She must've lived.

If she died, Sofia didn't know how she could continue on. At this point, a fire of determination was lit within her. She would find her mother.

She was about to take another nap when she heard a new sound outside. It was the sound of something being cut.

Getting up from her bed and jumping down from the third floor, she landed as silently and deftly as a cat. Her bow was already in her hands.

'Is it another monster?' she thought to herself before she peeked outside. What she saw shocked her.

A man clad in black clothing was slicing down zombies left and right. He stood on one spot, steady as a mountain. The aura of power emanated from him.

His moves were fluid and his strikes were domineering.

He didn't rush towards the zombies, but rather used the least amount of movement possible to dodge their attacks before slashing at them.

And with each of his attacks, the life of a zombie was reaped.

Sofia was full of excitement. She knew full well how hard it was to do what the man was doing. *η0velNext.coM*

She marveled at his silhouette and thought, 'This is true power! He might be a soldier or a policeman that survived the initial attack.'

Afterward, when he was safe in the shelter of the mall, he could think about where to allocate his rewards.

Even after Tan's death, his plan remained unchanged. He would go and raid the mall, maybe even resting for a bit. 'This is just a stop. One of many...' he mused.

He needed to confirm his family's fate. If they survived, Azief would protect them until they found a way to safely live inside this new world. If not, Azief would have to do it alone.

Another thing he noticed was that when he reached level 20 the rewards the zombies gave him grew smaller.

Furthermore, it seemed like every 10 levels was an important milestone where the system would unlock something as he grew qualitatively.

His mind was full of musings as he kept slicing the zombies and collecting all the loot. Even before he was level 20 he was fully capable of one shotting the zombies, let alone now that his stats had reached an astonishing level. To give one example, his base agility was now at 35 and with all of his bonuses, it reached 47.

"Should I test Divine Sense?" Azief wondered. He had gotten this skill a while back and had yet to test it. Reputedly, it could detect living organisms.

As he used the technique to cast out a divine sense, sensed someone. Someone living. Darting his eyes in the direction of his sense, he thought, 'Someone's still alive!'

A survivor?

Knowing this, Azief sped up his killing and before he knew it the ground in front of the mall was littered with zombie heads. None of these corpses would get up again.

Azief approached the mall and said with a commanding tone, "Open the shutters."

If the person inside didn't comply, he would force his way in.

Suddenly clacking sounded as the shutters were being raised. Azief took a breath of relief. It looked like the person wasn't unreasonable.

Azief lifted his hood, waiting for the shutters to finish lifting. As soon as they did, he looked in front of him at the woman who was waiting for him on the other side.

Their eyes met and they were both shocked. He knew her.

"Sofia?"

"Azief?"

The wind blew as an awkward pause and staring began.

"You.." both of them said.

"Whatever, hurry up! Come inside before more of their kind arrive," Sofia was the first to break the awkwardness and Azief just nodded.

He entered and the mall shut down once again.

Editor's Note: Proofreading really gave me a new sense of respect for the authors, editors, and translators of the world. Like seriously, at my speed, it could take me anywhere from 15-20 hours to finish just 10 chapters.