Chapter 7: Jump

A cold wind blew and the smell of death permeated through the streets of Joy Park at night.

Azief could smell the rotting of flesh, could hear the crackling of a fire, and the beating of his heart. He was nervous.

Nervous in the way a thrill-seeker would be before they took their final plunge.

It was a nervous excitement instead of nervous fear.

Right now his sympathetic nervous system, responsible for the stress response, was firing on all cylinders, flooding him with hormones that would push him to survive.

Bravery. In light of what was to come, he would need to be braver than he ever was, braver than anyone ever was. His survival would depend on a combination of strength, luck, and courage.

"All or nothing…" Azief murmured. "If I'm wrong, I get eaten. If I'm right I might be able to leave. I hope I have enough agility."

From his behind, from his front, from his left, from his right, he was besieged on all sides by zombies. They shambled towards him, surrounding him, walking listlessly, groaning and dragging their feet.

Azief looked at the trees nearby, unaffected by the crumbling buildings. Near the candy shop was a tree almost three stories high.

Sprinting over, he quickly climbed the tree with his agility, but his plans didn't stop just there.

If his plan worked correctly, the zombies would follow him, but they wouldn't be able to climb up with him.

Unfortunately, under Murphy's Law, some of the mutated zombies succeeded, but they were easily cut down when they reached Azief.

Seeing that it wasn't possible to climb up, some of the zombies clawed at the tree, others smashed their heads against it, while some tried to eat it. In total, some 350 zombies were underneath Azief.

"Thank god for their stupidity!" Azief chuckled as he climbed higher and positioned himself to jump towards a signal post.

If he jumped from this height before he upgraded his stats he doubted that he would've survived, but, with his new power, anything was possible.

He planned to jump using this tree as a springboard, land gracefully on the ground, and sprint towards the residential area and rest there before going to the mall.

The one flaw he could think of with this plan was that once he committed there would be no turning back.

There were unknown dangers all throughout the city and if he stumbled onto another beast like the one at the elementary school he would undoubtedly die. 𝒩ᴏᴠ𝐞l𝒩 ext.c0m

Alas, at this point, he had no choice but to gamble.

If he stayed here, sooner or later, he would be found out by the beast in the elementary school and there wouldn't be a way for him to escape death. At least with this plan, he would have some chance of survival.

The structure of the residential area made it easy for Azief to hide and he could rest easy for a bit if he reached it.

Why, then, did he attract all the zombies nearby?

Simple.

He wants his path to be unblocked.

He realized there were zombies nearby the signpost area and they formed a barrier that prevented him from crossing over.

If he gathered them all into one place, when he jumped, he wouldn't have to fight his way through a wall of undead.

Then, looking from the tree's highest point, he saw a gruesome view. Hundreds of zombies filled the area wanting to eat him.

All varieties of them surrounded him. Some have lost a few limbs, some lost eyes, a couple even lost their nether regions.

Below him, the zombies in his immediate area were still trying to climb, and those that succeeded were dispatched by Azief. What an awful sight!

Preparing for the worst, he equipped the potions as a contingency and said bitterly, "Bravery sprinkled with a bit of stupidity and stubbornness," He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, inhaling the polluted air.

Cold sweat dripped down his back, dropping to the ground beneath him.

As if on cue with the inaudible drip, he launched his body to the air shattering the branch he was standing on mere seconds past.

He was like a rocket, the wind whooshed around his face, giving him the sensation of flying.

And as gravity took him into her embrace, pulling him towards the ground, he used all of his agility to land as gracefully, dispersing the momentum, without injuring himself.

If his bones broke, especially the ones in his feet, he would become a sitting duck.

In reality, this took much longer to explain than to occur and though Azief felt as if it took a lifetime, it was really over in just a few moments.

As he landed, he redirected his momentum by rolling. "Ouch," he cried.

He may have been successful in dispersing most of the momentum, but that didn't spare him from the pain of flying practically 10 meters then landing.

He gave a slightly painful smile as he drank a stamina and vitality potion and got up.

Looking behind him, he felt a burst of satisfaction, as the zombies turned their heads towards him. "Come get me, groaning stiffs," he taunted as the zombies began walking towards him and moving away from the tree.

He obviously didn't do all of that for nothing and seized the opportunity to run.

In front of the signpost where he landed, dozens of cars burned and corpses littered the road.

Azief kept running, disregarding everything, and didn't even slow down seeing golden coins or skillbooks.

'Maybe later…' he thought to himself.

He didn't have time to pick them up now and he knew that being excessively greedy in his situation was equivalent to flirting with death.

'No….I'm not going to fall victim to stupidity.'

As he navigated through the maze of burning cars, going over, under, around, and through obstacles, his stamina was slowly draining from his body.

Finally bypassing the maze of cars and the signpost, he began a full-out sprint towards his destination.

He was desperately trying to distance himself from the horde. and he entered the residential areas, jumping through the house's landscaping, he heaved a sigh of relief.

Most of the houses near the signpost belonged to middle-class families, but further in there were mansions entrenched by high walls that belonged to rich families.

While he was making his way through the houses, he met a stray zombie wandering aimlessly. "More stiffs," he remarked, clearly annoyed.

He was tired, sleep-deprived, nervous, and on the verge of breaking down.

Just the sight of a zombie would make him want to puke, after all, man could only take so much in one day.

The world changed, zombies were hunting him, and he couldn't forget the alien monster that was occupying the school.

To make it worse, he was haunted by the gruesome sights he witnessed today.

To be honest, he wants to lay on a comfy bed and get some rest without having to worry about being eaten by some beast or bitten by a zombie. But, remembering his goals, he couldn't stand still.

Azief brandished his blade, shining in the moonlight, and with one swift movement, he blew past the zombie while slashing its head, decapitating it.

He repeated this process with all of the zombies that barred his entrance to the residential area.

'I made the right decision to raise my strength and agility,' he praised.

His speed was faster and his strikes packed more of a punch than before, allowing his travels to remain virtually unhindered.

He only needed on strike to dispatch most of his foes due to the combination of his strength. The laws of physics worked in his favor. Even a pebble traveling 200 mph could destroy a man's skull. Imagine that with a sword. Now, the only thing he lacked was stamina.

After he had finished up killing the stray zombies, Azief decided to find a place to rest. He couldn't keep going like this.

Even if he had an infinite amount of potions, his mental state was so fragile it could fall apart at any moment.

So, when he spotted a large house that seemed like its defenses were suitable, he jumped from outside and entered, like a cat.

The zombies would find it hard to enter if they were obstructed by walls, similarly to the smallest order of giants from Attack on Titan (Shingeki no Kyojin).

And what was better, enclosed spaces like this made it much easier for him to deal with zombies if they ever managed to break through. In this environment his agility shined.

However, on a closer inspection, the house he had chosen has some significant flaws that deterred him. Unrelenting, he chose another house.

And another.

And another.

He had tried so many items that he lost count.

Thus, the process continued.

He would search for a house, find one, examine it, find some type of flaw, and then move on to the next house.

When he was interrupted by any zombies, he decapitated them in one smooth blow. As long as he didn't make too much noise, the horde would have a hard time finding him.

Noticing that there weren't too many zombies here, Azief concluded that the residents must have cleared out before the massacre really started.

However, just as he was thinking this, heard the horde.

And upon turning back, he recognized some familiar faces. "Fuck, why can't they leave me alone!" he exclaimed.

It was the hoard he ditched when he jumped from the tree.

Deciding that he couldn't deal with them Azief quickly escaped and hid.

He waited. And he waited.

Time passed as the zombies kept walking around the area. In this time, he made no attempts to find another house, effectively erasing his presence.

For an hour he made no sounds, no movements. He even almost fell asleep. He only grew more tired, frustrated, and nervous as the night went on.

He waited for a long time before he heard the footsteps moving away.

Then, making sure the zombies have decided to give up the search, Azief crawled out of his hiding place.

His stomach growled and he looked left and right, fearing that the zombies heard him. He needed to find some food, fast. Another mishap like that could alert the hoard.

After making sure there were no zombies nearby, he decided to break into the house he was currently at.

It doesn't seem to have zombies or any living creatures inside.

Even if it wasn't safe enough to rest, there was surely some food.

He began to salivate, imagining meat, chickens, and eggs as he slowly walked to the front door. He raised his blade, about to break the lock, when suddenly the door opened.

"Come in," a voice beckoned.

Startled, Azief gripped his blade and went into a battle stance. He only needed one reason and he would eliminate whatever was speaking to him. "Who's there?" Azief asked cautiously.

"Come on inside. Quickly before the corpses come!" The voice urged from behind the door in Chinese.

Azief was puzzled.

Though the man spoke to him in Chinese, he only knew the most basic parts of the language.

How was it possible that he understood the man on a native level?

Azief, still puzzled and cautious, saw no other choice but to enter the house. He did so and slowly closed the door behind himself.

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