

## **New Eden 661**

### Chapter 661 Explaining The Layout

A set of blueprints with both the mansion and its underbelly appeared. Then another, with the layout of the exterior, with all the security measures in place.

The blueprint looked to be interactive, as Alex could see all the security measures as locked out on the screen.

Katherine grabbed a small remote and started pressing on it, making the images swap out to camera views.

She showed him a layout rapidly, before showing the yard outside the mansion, and then the tunnels under it.

When the image showed the south gate from which he would enter from, he saw many people gathered at the front of it.

"Looks like they are expecting me. Why is that?" Alex asked as the feed switched to another one.

"Worry not. They aren't expecting you. Those are the men we got to surrender. They are waiting for the gates to open so they can leave. Of course, we aren't letting them escape so easily. We already tied them up to crimes committed by the Bianchi family, and all of them are being sent to jail for a long time."

Alex was almost disappointed with how easily they got out. But if he could save himself some trouble, he wasn't against it.

Katherine ignored his disappointed pout and kept going through the feeds. Until she found what she wanted.

"There it is."

She gave a small nudge on the back of Timothy's head.

"Why did you put that feed at the end of the list? You knew it was the first one I would show."

Timothy smiled sheepishly.

"I'm sorry, ma'am. It's the last feed we got, and we haven't had time to rearrange the order, with all the work we had to do."

Katherine pulled out her tongue at him.

Alex looked at the interaction and laughed internally. These two must have worked together for a while, with the familiarity of their interaction.

"In any case. This is your target," she said, zooming in on the feed of a large and lavish room.

A man was sitting at a table, eating some pasta, and drinking wine, his face calm but containing traces of annoyance.

"This is Francesco Bianchi. The new head of the Bianchi family, who runs things on the Quebec branch of the mob. They appointed him after his father died in a hit. We suspect he might have orchestrated it, but have no proof of this. But, suffice to say, he's a shit stain."

Alex chuckled at her words.

"Nevertheless, he is the one that leads the family, and getting to him wouldn't have been easy if we hadn't starved the men for weeks. Very few of them willingly remain loyal to a man who keeps acting like he's a king, while they have to ration their food.

"As of this morning, about eighty percent of his men amassed at the gate, ready to come out of the gate and abandon him. This leaves him with only sixteen able bodies, still willing to defend his mansion. You have your work cut out for you, I reckon."

Alex looked at the video feed of the man, eating in his bunker, alone, and his blood boiled.

'How little do you care about others, that you would let even your men down?' he seethed inside his mind.

Katherine felt a slight mental pressure while she stood next to Alexander and took a step back.

"The men spread out around the mansion, and they have set up some booby traps with grenades and such gadgets. Unfortunately, from here, I cannot disarm those. You will have to be careful," she declared, showing a few of the traps the cameras could catch.

She knew there would be more in some corners where the security cameras couldn't see, but she assumed the kid would be careful enough not to get himself blown to pieces.

Katherine then showed him the blueprints of the mansion so he could memorize his path to the hidden bunker without wasting too much time. Even if their op was secretive, once gunshots started echoing through the place, it wouldn't be too long before someone alerted the cops.

She and her techies would do their best to intercept the calls, but if too many of them went out simultaneously, there wasn't much she could do. Blocking out an entire sector from the satellites would most definitely alert the government, and the army would then drop in.

So they had to intercept the calls manually.

But she believed in her team. They were her best team, after all.

Once Alex declared he had memorized his path, Katherine tapped her remote again. This time, an image of a 3D reconstruction of the bunker appeared.

"This is an estimated copy of the bunker and its defence measures. We can't say for sure what you need to expect once you head in there, but this is an estimate, judging by how much power the generator is giving, versus the consumption."

A few things lit up on the screen, in bright red, and Alex recognized a few of them.

There were some wall-mounted and hidden mini-guns, as well as flamethrowers, and other things he couldn't recognize.

"We found some liquid fuel tanks while looking at the blueprints, and no other place requires liquid fuel, so we assume this bunker uses it for defence. The turrets will also pop out the walls and ceiling, and track anyone who isn't registered in the system. Some of these measures, we aren't sure what they do. They look jury-rigged, like some ass hat with an engineering degree tried out some deadly ideas he had in his sick head. So expect anything."

Alex looked at the placement of everything and memorized it.

"How do I get in there?" he asked.

Katherine grinned at him. She pulled out a small SIM card from her pocket and handed it over to him.

"That is a very simple answer. There will be a security checkpoint when you reach the door. Find a keypad or any other electronic device that authenticates the person trying to get in, and slide that into any port you find. I will do the rest from here. Unlock the door, disable the traps. Hell, I'll even clog his toilets if you ask me to. I'll have complete control over his bunker," she said, with a wide smile on her lips.

Some of her techies stifled a laugh at her toilet comment and kept working.

Alex looked at her, then at the blueprint. He put the SIM card away.

It seemed like she had planned for everything.

## Chapter 662 Set Into Motion

Alexander looked at her, feeling she was still hiding something from him.

"And how will you warn me if the situation changes?" he asked.

Katherine smiled at him once more. She then pulled out a small earpiece from a plastic case she had in a pocket of her blouse.

"With this, of course. Did you think I would let you go in there all wild west and wreak havoc on the place? No, young man. I will be in your ear all along the way and guide you through the halls myself."

She didn't trust Alexander would simply do a clean job, in this case. Ever since she knew he would be on the op, she had done her homework on him.

She had called Jack Boudreau and asked him for his opinion on the young man. She also pulled out any and every piece of information available online about Alexander Leduc and studied his pattern of behaviour.

He was hardly the most stable person, in her opinion. Let alone do a quick job of the men, she hardly believed he would do a clean one, either, if left on his own.

Which was why she was adamant that he carry the earpiece.

At first, Alex pushed the earpiece back. He had a feeling she wanted him to use this for more than just staying in touch.

And he didn't want any voice in his ear acting like the angel on his shoulder.

This was a day where the devil on the other shoulder would take the wheel. These men deserved what was coming their way.

But Katherine shoved her hand back forward, her face now stern.

"This isn't a request, Alexander. Put the earpiece in. You are not going inside the compound without me in your head."

Alexander was about to ask if she thought she could hold him in place, but before he even opened his mouth, she hushed him with her other hand.

"I know what you're thinking. I couldn't hold you here if I wanted to, yada yada yada. But you are mistaken about one thing. I might not have the power to force you to stay here. But I can force Violette to never contact you again. To leave your guild on New Eden. And even force her to never play again. Weigh your next words, Mr. Leduc."

Her tone had gone cold and authoritative in an instant. And somehow, even without the use of mana, Alexander could feel she was applying some kind of mental pressure on him.

'Is this just natural charisma?' he wondered, slightly taken aback.

But he wasn't about to put Violette into this position. He somehow knew that if Katherine applied these threats, she would make sure to tell the girl whose fault it was they suddenly cut her off.

And he couldn't bring himself to cut her chances. Even if he wanted nothing more than to decorate the inside of that mansion with its occupant's innards.

"Fine," he grumbled, snatching the earpiece.

Katherine went back to her wide smile as he put the earpiece in, as if the entire interaction hadn't happened.

"Good. I will expect you to follow my lead in there, and not question the orders that I may give you. After all, this is still my op. Are we clear?"

Alexander clicked his tongue, but nodded his head reluctantly.

She looked at the screen again and spun around.

"Well, won't you look at the time?! It's time to open the gates for our lost little lambs. Alfred, tell your men to apprehend all of them. And if even one of them starts trouble, put them down."

"Yes, ma'am," Alfred acknowledged, rising to his feet.

He exited the bus and started barking orders to the mercs outside. They quickly jogged to the gate about two hundred meters ahead and surrounded it.

It was almost comical to see the twenty-odd mercs jog forward like this was boot camp.

Alex was about to follow them when Katherine raised her hand toward him.

"Tut, tut, tut. Not yet, my impatient little psychopath. Wait until we apprehend them before heading out. We wouldn't want you to cause more trouble for the brave men and women in uniform."

Alex almost felt like she treated him like a kid, and he hated it very much. But the respect he had for all of this woman's surroundings and herself, along with Alfred and Violette, kept him from snapping back at her or making any offhand comment.

Katherine liked that he kept docile. She wasn't treating him like this without reason, though.

Contrary to what Alex thought, that she wanted him to remain civil, it was quite the opposite. She was riling him up.

And she planned on riling him up even more once he was inside. She would yank on the metaphorical leash until he was in front of the one that had caused his daughter to almost die.

And then she would let go.

Her soft smile turned into a more devilish grin, which escaped Alex's eyes since he was looking at the main screen above the techies, and watching the op start.

It took close to twenty minutes for all the Bianchi thugs to be on their asses, with zip-ties holding their hands behind their backs. And not cheap ones, either.

Alex was impressed by how in order everything went. He had expected more of a fight.

But the moment a single one of them tried to rebel, a single bullet to the head fixed the problem, and all the others suddenly became soft as kittens.

Katherine smiled as they tied the last one up, and looked at Alexander, who looked at her as well.

"Now, it's your turn. Good luck."

Alex nodded back at her and walked out of the bus.

He started strolling toward the gates, taking his sweet time. But as he did, he recognized one man tied up on the ground.

It was the cop that had been in his room, the day he woke up, after his first real altercation with the Bianchi butler. But he wasn't wearing his uniform.

The man was sweating bullets, as he watched the mercs tie all of them. And when he saw Alexander walk up to him, his stomach dropped, as did his mouth.

"You! No. No, no, no, no no! It can't be!"

Chapter 663 Knock Knock

Alexander walked up to him, crouching next to him with a smile on his lips.

But to the man, it looked like Satan's face.

"You can't be here. How did you survive? The news said you died in the service tunnels!"

Alex tilted his head slightly, wondering what he was talking about. But he could guess this had been some information manipulation from Katherine's underlings.

He only wondered why she would do it.

And the answer came in his ear.

"I didn't want them to expect retaliation from you. So I changed the news with some image manipulation and deep fake, to make it look like you died in the rat incident.

"I was also planning to have the videos of both altercations between you and the Bianchis play in the bunker once you had let me inside the mainframe. Just for some dramatic flair."

Alex could hear the slight undertones of playfulness in her voice across the comms, and had to control himself from tearing the earpiece out.

He elected not to respond to her, and instead talk to the cop.

"Why are you here? Aren't you a cop? And if it is what I think it is, why were you in my hospital room that day?"

The man gulped, realizing he had been made.

"Listen, man. I'm only following orders. I'm just a striker. They tell me what to do, nothing more, I swear!"

Alex grinned wider at him.

"I know. Don't worry. I won't hurt you."

Alex had already guessed they had sent the crooked cop to finish the job. So he wasn't about to let him walk away so easily.

He brought his hand up on the man's head, tapping it lightly, as the man sighed in relief. And then his vision went dark.

He didn't get to understand what happened as his soul passed on.

Alex had the top of his head in his big, furry hand, as he partially melded with White, and crushed his skull instantly.

In his ear, Katherine's disappointed voice echoed.

"Look at you. Not even inside the compound and already making a mess of things. Blood stains on asphalt, you know?"

She sighed loudly in his ear as she watched him stand back up on the cameras and walk toward the open gates. Katherine called out for a cleaner to carry the body away and wash any trace of his death from the street, as the other gangsters suddenly fell quiet.

A few of them had seen the interaction between Alex and the gangster, and couldn't believe their eyes.

How could a human crush someone's head so fast and so effortlessly? The man didn't even scream out in pain.

It struck a deep fear inside them, and they thanked their lucky stars they had accepted to surrender before the man walked into the mansion grounds.

What would happen to the ones that stayed? No one knew.

But that didn't stop their imaginations from spinning tales, each one more gruesome than the last.

Alfred watched Alex walk past him, after leaving a mess behind for his men to clean and worried. He did not worry about the young man's safety.

Rather, he worried how far he would go, for the sake of vengeance.

"That is a slippery slope you are treading, young man..." he mumbled to himself.

Unknown to him, Alex had heard him and even answered in a whisper.

"They forced me down that path. It only ends when they die."

Making his way toward the mansion he could now see in the not too far away distance, Alex started thinking about all the times the Bianchi men had threatened him, and others around him. Anger slowly rose inside him, thinking about all the lives they probably ruined, aside from his.

"People like you deserve the harshest of fate. Your souls don't deserve to step into the cycle of reincarnation..." he seethed to himself.

As he got closer to the mansion, he started hearing gunshots, as tufts of grass at his sides exploded upwards, and sparks flew off the asphalt near him.

'Seems like they see me. Better stop lazing forward, then.'

Alex melded completely with White before dashing forward like a bullet out of a barrel. He practically flew toward the main door, zigzagging as he went, to make himself harder to hit.

But when he reached the door, instead of slowing down to open it, he simply pushed through it.

The wooden door exploded inward, transforming into thousands of wood splinters, splintering into the nearby walls, and pieces reaching the staircase in front of him.

The manor was built in the old Tuscan style, with stone walls and floors, with granite and marble patterns. The ceiling, high above Alex, decorated with ceiling roses and a stucco finish.

It was a stylish house, to say the least. But Alex wasn't here to admire the decor.

Already, he could hear the running footsteps of the men on the floor above, getting ready to greet him.

\*Tink\* \*Clink\* \*Clatter\*

A metallic clattering noise echoed around his feet, and Alex looked down, seeing a round, black object.

He kicked it away, reflexively, and erected a thin shield of mana between himself and the object, right before it detonated.

Alex's free ear rang a bit from the loud conflagration, but in his other ear, a voice congratulated him.

"Nice thinking. Whatever you did, you just resisted the blast of a grenade. I'm impressed, but I doubt they are done. So I suggest you get on the move."

Alex groaned in annoyance

"Please stop talking. Let me do my thing."

He heard Katherine chuckle in his ear before it went silent again.

Then he heard more footsteps.

Currently, Alex was in a cloud of dust, from the grenade blowing up part of the floor and walls he had kicked it to, and there was stone dust everywhere.

"Did you get him?"

"I don't know. I can't see shit, Roberto. Why don't you come check?"

Alex walked forward, revealing himself to the man just outside the dust cloud.

"I'll save you the trouble. You missed."

"Oh Shit!"

\*Ratatata\* Bang Bang\* \*Bang Bang\*

Chapter 664 Clueless Bianchi

From inside the hidden bunker, under the Bianchi mansion, the mob boss was finishing his meal, his face stuck in a rictus of annoyance.

His men had told him to stay inside the bunker since they expected a raid to start that morning. But it had been hours, and nothing had happened yet.

Normally, from inside the bunker, he had access to the surveillance system of the mansion. But ever since that fucking Oracle whatshisface had busted his security wide open, all his screens showed nothing.

He got up from his table and headed to the security console, hoping it would give him a different result.

As he sat in front of it, the screens were still black and unresponsive.

Francesco stood back up, this time heading to the door to the bunker, and pressed the intercom button. Since the intercom to the outside was linked to the power inside, it worked for him to speak to his men.

But they had to answer with predetermined knocks

"Hey! Is it safe outside? I'm getting real fuckin' tired of the same four walls. I want to go take a swim, god dammit!" he shouted, pressing the intercom button.

One loud bang on the door, meaning no, echoed.

"Then get to work, you fuckwits! I don't pay you to stand guard at the door! Go deal with this shit, so things can get back to normal!" he shouted into the intercom.

Two bangs, this time, signifying yes.

He walked away from the door, sighing loudly.

"I swear to god. I'm surrounded by morons. How these men didn't die while under my father is a fuckin' miracle."

Francesco was starting to lack anything to do, while stuck in here.

The books on the shelves? All his fathers, and boring to him.

The stocked shows? All boring nineties shit, in his opinion.

And with the internet down, he couldn't access anything that would entertain him. Not even porn.

Who would cut out even porn?! What kind of monster deprives a man of the most basic form of entertainment?!

Seeing as he had nothing to do, he sat down on his sofa and pulled out an old movie from the computer's storage. An old war movie about a war that had happened more than a century ago.

Looking at the cast from the movie's information tab, as it booted up, and cursed.

"What the fuck a name is John Wayne? And who the fuck is Sean Connery?! Goddamn old man and his terrible taste in movies!" he cried out.

He started the movie nonetheless, out of boredom. He hoped he wouldn't have the time to finish it before being allowed to go back out of the bunker.



And the gods would grant his wish...

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At the entrance of the mansion, the shooting had died down. The stonework of the floor and walls was in shambles, with holes every few inches, and fragments exploded out of the walls and floors.

Alexander walked down from the second floor, which he had jumped to at some point during the shootout, and headed toward the right side of the lobby. The entrance he had taken was on the far left side of the mansion, and his quarry was in the right wing.

Sadly, Katherine had advised him against entering through the other door, since most of the jury-rigged traps seemed to have been set up in the right wing.

It would be safer for him to enter from the other side and make his way through the mansion, dealing with the remaining thugs as he went.

And given how he had promised Kary he would be safe, Alex opted to follow the safer path. Of course, he didn't feel the least threatened by the monkeys.

They couldn't shoot for their life's worth, and their movements were painfully slow in his perception, making them almost entirely unable to get a lock on him at all.

After dealing with the three men in the lobby, Alexander knew there were not enough men and guns in this house to stop him from reaching his goal.

Walking through the hallway, a wall with many doors to his left and windows from floor to ceiling to his right, Alex caught a reflection in one of the glass panes. Turning to the left at the end of the corridor, he ended up face-to-face with a man trying to stab him with a big knife.

Of course, the reflection he had caught was the sun reflecting off the blade and into the window, so he knew the man was there. Catching the blade with his bare hand, Alex punched the thug in the face, feeling his nose, teeth, and jaw shatter under his knuckles.

And before the man could even reel from the impact, Alex spun around, roundhouse kicking his head into the stone wall.

With a crack and a squelch, Alex felt the skull shatter between the two surfaces, and the head popped open, sending brain matter on the wall.

What had once been a nice white marble wall was now smeared with blood and gore from a man's open skull. Alex watched the man skid to the ground as he brought his leg back down.

And in his ear, he heard Katherine complain again.

"Would you stop causing such a mess? Can't you kill people cleanly, with that insane strength of yours? Such a messy kid."

She was teasing, of course, as she relished in his starting carnage.

Katherine was not there to control him in the least. She had already warned her cleaners that the mansion would be an utter mess before the op even started.

Her only goal was to rile him up. She wanted Francesco to suffer a fate worse than death.

'No one puts my only child in danger,' she thought to herself, feeling the urge to go in herself and tear the man limb from limb.

But Katherine knew she was physically incapable of such a feat. But her hired dog was, and that was the next best thing.

"Careful in the next room. We caught them setting up a few traps, and they also readied some Molotovs," she warned into the earpiece.

Alex nodded his head while looking at a corner camera, knowing she was watching his every move.

'This woman is enjoying this more than I am. I can tell by her voice...' Alex thought, as he continued walking forward.

'Then let's give her a show.'

Chapter 665 Darkness During The Day

He entered the room that was now before him, which resembled a large lounge, or living room with a bar at the far end. The furniture all looked high end, and expensive, as did the massive aquarium, which looked to be at least 300 gallons.

Inside it were fish of vibrant colours, swimming peacefully.

Alex looked around the room, walking slowly, waiting for the thugs to come at him. But Katherine warned him to stop.

"Stop! One step in front of you, trip-wire. It's tied to grenades on both sides. Then behind the sofa, there is a hastily made nail bomb. It seems remote detonated, so they are just waiting for you to pass near it."

Alex looked at his feet, and he indeed saw the semi-transparent fish wire stretched out four inches above the ground.

Following the wire, he quickly spotted a grenade lodged behind a small coffee table on the side of the sofa, and another one hidden behind a statue pedestal, on which rested a bust of what he imagined was the current owner of the house.

He smiled as he went to the sofa.

They set the traps up in the assumption of someone who would rush toward the bunker and didn't take into consideration the possibility the invader wouldn't be in a hurry.

Alex stopped in front of the eight-place sectional sofa and kicked into the center section, using his augmented strength to launch the damned thing into the bar counter, taking the nail bomb with it.

The bomb must have been poorly made, as it exploded on contact with the counter, shredding the back of the furniture to pieces, but not making it much farther.

A few nails launched over it, but they weren't on a trajectory that could harm Alexander.

He then rapidly acted again, grabbing the grenade under the coffee table, and chucked it into the corridor near the bar, causing the men hidden there to suddenly jump out, lest they turn to ground meat.

And before the second one could blow up, he picked it up and threw it into the fish tank, mentally apologizing to the innocent fish.

The grenade blew up, shattering the fish tank and killing the fish inside by the pressure of the explosion, as the massive amount of water fell to the ground on both sides of the tank.

The two men that were in the corridor jumped to their feet, machine guns ready, and pointed at Alexander.

"Give up, kid! We have the numbers advantage, and we have guns!"

Alex chuckled.

The man's face turned to a scowl.

"Why you laughin' punk?!"

"I'm sorry. I really didn't mean to offend, but I thought I heard you say I should give up."

The thug looked confused for a second, before raising his machine gun higher and pointing it at Alex's head.

"That's right! Give up. There's no way out of this!"

With a sinister grin, Alexander shook his head, clicking his tongue.

"Tut, tut, tut. I'm sorry, big guy. I think you misunderstand. See, I'm not looking for a way out. But you should be. You see, I'm not stuck in here with you. You're stuck in here with me."

A shiver ran down the man's spine, and his finger twitched on his trigger, causing the gun in his hand to go off. But his target had disappeared.

The room suddenly turned pitch black, which was strange, given the early hour of the day and the massive bay windows.

The goon and his pal started frantically spinning their heads in every direction, wondering where the young man had gone. Until they heard his voice echoing all around them.

"I haven't tried this form yet. So you'll have to excuse my sloppy execution. I'll try to make this as painful as I can, alright? Ah ah ah ah!" Alex laughed, his mind relishing in the fear he was sensing from the five men suddenly trapped in his newly expanded darkness.

This power came from one of the demon Counts inside Solomon's signet ring, Räum. His ability to conjure, manipulate, and weaponize shadows was impressive, if somewhat lacklustre, combat-wise.

But it was perfect in this case.

The five thugs were suddenly trapped in the room where they thought they had trapped Alexander and were already panicking, as the shadows encompassing the room seemed to move.

Alexander made sure to encapsulate the cameras so Katherine could keep an eye on him, and expanded the shadows just outside the room, across from the fish tank, where two more thugs were lying in wait.

The last one was crouched behind the bar counter, a bottle in his hand, ready to ignite the cloth that dangled from the bottleneck and chuck it at the intruder.

Alexander knew where all of them were, thanks to the annoying woman chatting away in his right eardrum, and he could use his skill accordingly.

But he was nowhere to be seen.

This was because the shadows themselves were part of him. In perspective, Alex had become the large, black, smoky dome that engulfed the room, and he was everywhere and nowhere, all at once.

He enjoyed their panic for a bit before Katherine started complaining in his ear.

"Come on, already. We don't have all day, Mr. Leduc."

He clicked his tongue, annoyed that she kept being so bossy, but knew she was also right.

How long before someone reached the cops, with all the explosions and gunshots that had already echoed?

So he got to work.

The two in the middle of the room were standing a few feet apart, looking in opposite directions, so Alex decided to have some fun.

He slid up from the shadows on the floor, right between them, and uttered, 'Boo!' as he tapped on their shoulders. He then melted right back into the shadows, as both of them turned around in panic, firing their guns, and ultimately, taking each other out.

Another sinister laugh echoed in the room.

"Ha ha ha ha! You guys are like scared toddlers, suddenly stuck in a room with no lights. How long until you piss yourselves, I wonder."

One of them suddenly snapped, running out into the lounge, and firing his gun as he screamed like a madman.

"DIE BASTARD!! ARGGHH!!!!!!"

\*Ratatatatata!\*

Chapter 666 Sadistic Tendencies

Alex laughed in his mind, as the gunshots flew out of the shadow dome, doing no damage to him, and crashing through the windows that led outside and into the walls.

He manipulated the shadows around the man into small, sharp blades, and started giving ever so small cuts across his body. The cuts were minuscule and were not enough to threaten his life.

But as they piled up, and the blood began pooling around the man, he felt his sanity slowly seep out of his mind, following his blood out of his body.

"SHOW YOURSELF, YOU COWARD!" the man shouted, emptying his magazine.

As he reloaded, he heard a voice in his ear whisper, "As you wish."

And then a sharp pain pierced his back, going through him and coming out of his stomach. As he looked down, all he saw was a black blade, made of shadows, that slid back out of him.

He fell to his knees, feeling his life slip away.

"What the fuck are y—"

But before he could finish his phrase, another sharp pain assaulted him, this time in his throat, and then, nothing.

His eyes looked forward, as the scene changed from the wall to the ceiling to the floor, in quick succession, and stopped in a roll, looking at his own body, headless, crashing to the ground.

The two remaining men were shivering in terror, still hidden from Alex. Or so they thought.

Alex went for the man still behind the shattered fish tank and watched him mumble to himself, eyes closed, caressing a crucifix dangling from his neck.

He popped out from the wall behind him, using the man's shadow, and silently picked up a grenade from the ground next to him. He pulled the pin slowly, trying to make the least noise he could.

But the man heard the slick \*Tink\* of the pin popping, and his eyes opened in panic.

Alexander used his arms to hug the man from behind, holding the grenade against his chest, as he whispered into his ear.

"Your god doesn't care about you. But the demons in hell will greet you with open arms."

He turned to semi-solid shadows, right before the grenade blew up, splashing the man's body from the floor to the ceiling, bits and pieces flying everywhere.

Only a smoking, mangled body remained on the floor under the fish tank.

The only one left was the one behind the bar. And Alex chose a much worse fate for him.

Retracting the shadows from the room, he reappeared in the middle, where he had been previously, and started walking toward the bar. He could hear the man sobbing in fear behind it.

His appearance differed slightly from usual, with a thin black tail flicking behind him and two baby horns on his forehead.

But as he walked toward the bar, Katherine watched him change again through the cameras.

She was wondering how many forms Alexander could change into, as he morphed again.

This time, adorning his back, were two small bat wings, comically small for his size. They were not wings with which he could fly, that much was certain.

The horns he had grown slightly bigger, as one of them suddenly looked like it had broken off. His eyes also went from their black sclera to a completely white eye.

It almost looked like he had cataracts over his eyes.

As he leaned over the counter, his eyes flashed light pink under the white facade.

"Look at me, Paulo," he said, his voice sounding slightly more feminine than usual.

The man, hearing the voice, suddenly felt a calming wave wash over his mind. Almost as if his mother was coddling him, as a kid, during a severe thunderstorm.

He looked up, seeing Alexander's face, and his eyes glazed over.

"Yes, mistress Ose."

Alex had swapped to another demon Count, since they were the easier ones to access, with his current power level. This one was called Ose, and she was a demoness specialized in charming enemies, and controlling their minds.

She had charmed her way up to count, making her opponents off themselves until she was the only one in line for the rank.

And he intended to use the same tactic, here.

"Look at you, Paulo. Poor you. You look so cold. Look, you're shivering."

As he said this, the man started unconsciously shivering, as if the temperature had dropped.

"I think you should warm yourself. How about a pleasant fire? It looks like you are all ready to light one up, too. How about it?"

The man looked down at his hands, in which there was a lighter and a Molotov cocktail.

"You're right. It's so cold in here. Let me light a warm fire, so mistress Ose doesn't grow cold."

Paulo started flicking the lighter in his right hand until a flame lit up. Then he ignited the cloth that dangled from the bottle in his left hand.

Once the cloth was well ignited, he smiled warmly at Alex, before smashing the cocktail on his own forehead, immediately catching fire.

Through the flames, he kept smiling, while his face melted in flames, until his body dropped to the ground, dead.

Alexander undid the meld before walking away, his gaze ice cold.

The remaining men in the mansion were five goons, three of them being the boss' immediate aids, and two others who worked directly under his right-hand man, as well as the boss himself, Francesco Bianchi.

He knew they were all gathered close to the bunker, so all he had to do was make his way there. Katherine warned him of a few more traps on the way there, which he made quick work of until he stood in front of a staircase that descended into the house's basement.

Katherine was now almost giddy at the prospect of seeing her revenge passing. She didn't know what kind of twisted, sick thoughts crossed Alexander's mind right now, but she knew he was doing swift work of the men.

A passing thought crossed her mind, wondering if it was safe to let him in contact with her daughter. But she also felt like this was not his usual self, either.

She doubted he would ever be a danger to her. If something, she could see him acting this way to protect her, given what had previously happened.

'He's the dangerous type only when his friends and loved ones are in danger, or were put in danger. Good thing we are on his good side,' she thought to herself, as Alex reached the basement stairs.

Chapter 667 Loyal To The End

From the bottom of the stairs, deep inside the wine cellar, Francesco's men could hear the pitter-patter of Alexander's shoes on the stone surface of the stairs. The slow and calculated steps he took were like the gong of a bell announcing their doom.

For the three direct underlings to the Bianchi head, this was not something as fatalistic as for the other two. They were ready to give their life for him.

But for the two others? They were having second thoughts and regrets about having stayed here instead of surrendering.

Their minds were racing with all kinds of scenarios, wondering what kind of person could take down nine men in such a short time. They were thinking they were under attack by some kind of super commando.

But what kind of commando would walk down the stairs, making so much noise, practically announcing his arrival? A crazy one, maybe?

Or a supremely confident one?

When Alex reached the cellar floor, rows upon rows of wine racks greeted his sight. Enough to make any wine drinker wet himself.

But he was more preoccupied with the five men pointing their guns at him from a safe distance.

Seeing him unarmed, the three direct underlings wondered how he had reached here, with not so much as a scratch on his face. But the right-hand man to Francesco knew a threat when he saw one.

He opened fire on instinct, his brain telling him to kill the young man before him quickly, before it was too late.

This caused the other four to follow suit, and a barrage of bullets flew forward.

Alex stood there, taking the bullets directly with his body, as his skin turned a reddish hue. He was using another demon from the Counts, Marbas, who was directly under Gäap.

His strength was similar to Gäap's, being his body, with an unnatural resistance to any type of physical damage. With his strength, Alexander's body had become like that of an impenetrable tank.

Bullets bounced off his skin, barely leaving a mark, with a ricochet sound like the bullet had bounced off stone.

He stood there and endured for ten seconds until they had emptied their magazines. Then he grinned.

Alexander's body ballooned a bit, making him look like he had been injecting himself with steroids for years. His clothes tore off his chest, which didn't matter, since they were riddled with holes, anyway.

He started stepping forward, wordlessly, as his footfalls made the ground shake slightly, as if he now weighed a ton.

The five thugs hurriedly started reloading their guns. But one of them dropped his next magazine and decided to go Rambo style, pulling out a long knife.

He ran toward Alex, stabbing directly toward his gut. Unfortunately for him, thinking wasn't his strong suit.

If it had been, he would have realized that if bullets didn't penetrate his skin, a knife was even less likely to do so.

When the tip of his blade collided with Alex's skin, the blade bent to a ninety-degree angle.

Alex smiled at him, as he lowered his face to look into the man's eyes.

He felt the thug's soul leave his body in fear, before backhanding him away like a pimp to a prostitute who owed him money.

The man flew off, slamming through many wine racks, until he reached the stone wall, and splattered on it like a bug on a windshield.

The three underlings finished reloading at that moment, and watched in horror as the man exploded on impact on the wall. It was a gruesome sight, to say the least.

The split second they hesitated was enough for Alex to take a single step towards them, and suddenly be in their face. With a powerful punch downward, he turned the last goon into a paste, while splashing the three underlings with gore.

Francesco's right-hand man started backing away in fright.

Seeing him do so, Alex grinned even wider, and bear-hugged the other two to death, crushing their ribcages, and turning their insides into soup in the process, as they shat their innards.

The right-hand man couldn't back up very far, since he was almost at the door already.

Alexander looked him directly in the eye.

"Open the door. If you do, I might let you live."

His voice was gruff and low.

The man shook his head, refusing to obey. He still owed absolute loyalty to the Bianchi family.

But Alex had no time for arguing. So he punched him in the face, vaporizing his head across the wall and door.

He then unmelded and pulled out a small SIM card from his pants pocket. Surprisingly, it was left intact by the earlier barrage of bullets.

He saw a bio-metric panel to the right of the door, and rapidly found a small slot on the underside of it, where he could enter the SIM.

As he did, he heard Katherine chirping in his ear.

"Great job, you murderous psycho! I'm in. Now I can shut off all the countermeasures inside, giving you easy access to Francesco Bianchi. If you just give me two minutes, I will crack that open like a squirrel opening a peanut!"

Alex was feeling like she might be a bit too enthusiastic about this.

"No. Just open the doors. I want his measures to go off," he said, standing before the door.

He heard Katherine sighing loudly in his ear.



"But where's the fun in that? That'll only take me a few seconds. I wanted to play him the montage I did, with all the incidents with you, and then the scenes where you kill all his men."

"That is a waste of time. Weren't you the one who wanted me to get here quickly? I'm here. Now, open the door."

"Tch! You're no fun, mister. Fine, give me thirty seconds."

Alexander chuckled.

"Didn't you say a few seconds for the door?" he taunted.

"Shut up and let me have my fun!" she barked, the sound of keys clacking in the background.

She had launched a condensed version of her video, sad that she couldn't play up the gravitas of the man's situation. Katherine knew he was seeing it as they spoke, as she could see him inside there.

This was the only fun she would have, now that Alexander decided he was in a hurry to end things.

She took her sweet time cracking the door, taking a full minute, almost enough for her condensed video to end, before the door lock beeped in front of Alex.

"There. He's all yours," she said, turning the comms off.

She was content with taking a spectator seat from then on out. Her job was done.

#### Chapter 668 Quick But Cruel Vengeance

Francesco couldn't hear the gunfire inside the bunker, as the door was too thick to echo noise unless it was struck directly. But what he did hear, though, was the door suddenly unlocking.

Which, in itself, was abnormal. He had not given the code to anyone.

When the passcode was inputted into the console outside, and biometrics verified, normally, the countermeasures would turn offline and allow the person to enter safely.

But, seeing his automated defences pop out on the wall, Francesco ran to the far end of the room, making sure he couldn't accidentally get hit as well.

The door slid open, and all hell broke loose.

Francesco ducked behind a leather lounge seat, covering his ears as the sound of four Gatling guns ripped the air asunder. Fire burned the air, as two flame throwers activated, tracking something inside the room.

The defences went on for a minute, with explosions occurring every ten to fifteen seconds, until it became silent again.

Hearing footsteps, Francesco peeked over the lounge he had hidden behind.

And his face dropped.

Before the door had opened, his film had been interrupted, suddenly showing images of a kid, who tore through his men on the streets, and then in a park, followed by a scene of the inside of his mansion, guards dead and bloodied everywhere.

He already knew the freaking hacker had gone into his system, but now it was showing him things that he couldn't care less about, and things that would never happen.

But when he saw who was walking into his bunker, unscathed from his six countermeasures inside the walls, which were now in rubble, his heart skipped a beat.

He knew there were still things that should have popped up, but strangely, no more countermeasures were coming into play.

Katherine had deactivated the ones that were too dangerous as she unlocked the door. There were grenade launchers and small sub-sonic rail guns in the walls.

She didn't know how the Bianchis had gotten their hands on those, and she also wasn't sure how strong Alexander was. So she elected to shut them down, saving him some trouble.

But, when she watched the cameras, she almost regretted having done so. In the first ten seconds of the entrance, Katherine had to order her techies to back up the video and slow down the footage, just so she could see what Alexander was doing.

He was moving too fast for her eyes to follow him, as he ducked under the first onslaught of bullets and flames, rushing to the side, and starting to take the turrets out.

She didn't want to miss anything he did after this, so she kept one feed on live, and stopped watching the slow-mo one when everything was over. But her men didn't.

All of them watched on, awestruck that a human being could move away from an automated targeting system, and an advanced one at that, and take out machines that were meant to take down entire intrusion forces.

The sight was both amazing and terrifying at the same time. If a human could do this, then what could he do to a person?

Their unspoken questions eventually led them to watch the footage of Alexander's incursion into the Bianchi mansion, once the phone calls to the police had died down. And their stomachs were not ready.

But Katherine's attention was already on the bunker, where Alex was now speaking to Francesco Bianchi.

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"Who the fuck are you, kid?! Do you know whose house you barged into?! Do you think I won't kill you?!" Francesco hollered, trying to put up a tough front.

There was no way this single guy had taken down his entire force, right? And the hacker had probably made the countermeasures take themselves out.

That had to be it.

Seeing as the young man kept walking toward him, incredibly slowly, his steps like drops of water in a bathtub, Francesco pulled out his gun.

"You take one more step, and I'll pop your head! You hear me?!" he shouted, brandishing his gold-plated 44 Magnum.

But the man kept walking forward, unbothered.

Francesco couldn't even make eye contact with him. Every time he did, his heart almost froze, and he looked at his chest instead.

'What is with this guy?! Is he not afraid of dying?!' Francesco cried out in his mind.

Pulling the trigger, Francesco watched as the bullet suddenly ricocheted off the air before the man, lodging into the wall to the left.

"What the fuck..."

He fired again, and the same thing happened. Then he started pulling the trigger repeatedly, emptying the magazine as Alexander stepped closer and closer.

\*Click click click\*

Francesco had emptied the magazine, and still, the man was walking towards him, now only a few feet away, almost at arm's length.

"Seriously, who the fuck are you?" he asked, his voice now trembling and cracking.

Alex stopped as the gun bumped into his torso.

"It doesn't matter who I am. It only matters that you couldn't keep your dogs in check, and they harmed my people. And for this, you will pay the highest price."

Francesco could feel his heart start thumping uncontrollably in his chest.

He tried punching the man and making a break for it, but before his fist could reach Alexander's face, the arm dropped to the ground, separated from his body.

Alex didn't even give him time to scream in pain, and immediately used some low-level fire control to set the fresh wound ablaze, cauterizing it in moments. He slammed his hand over Francesco's mouth, keeping him from crying out.

Tears rose into the Italian's eyes as the pain reached his mind.

"Don't bother. If you had the power to do anything in the past, that epoch has long gone by. We are entering a time where people like me will rise, and people like you lose all they have, to the benefit of others. People like you will rise from the masses of people like me. But I will make sure I deal them with, just as I dealt with you. Sadly, you won't be there to see this."

A muffled shout came from under Alex's mouth, and he let go of Francesco's face.

"Wait! I can give you whatever you want! Just let me go! You want money, I have shit loads of money! It's all yours! Just don't kill me!"

Alex looked at him with a scoff.

"Kill you? I already dirtied my hands with more blood than was necessary to deal with your men. I won't kill you."

Francesco was about to sigh in relief until he felt a sharp pain in his chest.

Looking down, his breath cut short, he saw the young man's hand, jammed in all the way to the wrist, right in his sternum.

"I said I wasn't going to kill you, but I never said you were leaving here. I hope that when the demons are done with you, and finally consume your essence, your soul doesn't remember what it is like to be happy. But that won't be for a long time. Longer than you have ever imagined. And longer than your mind can fathom."

Yanking his hand back, Alex held in it a bright orb of white light. The orb quickly got sucked into the ring on his hand, disappearing in moments.

'I want him to suffer forever. Don't you dare eat him outright. Understand?' he mentally commanded the demons inside the signet.

Feeling of ecstasy and elation reached his mind, as the demons rejoiced at the new toy their master had sent them.

Alex felt something tug at his soul, but ignored it.

'I will deal with this when I can. But I had to do it,' he thought to himself.

## Chapter 669 Power Nap

The mercenaries had stayed outside the mansion grounds during the entire event, ready to enter at a moment's notice.

But when they saw the young man walk out, his clothes soaked in crimson liquid, along with his face, face and hands, they gasped.

He looked like an incarnation of a god of death and massacre, blood just dripping off of him as he walked past them.

Alfred stopped him, looking him up and down.

"Are you injured? Is any of this blood even yours?"

Although he asked this, he had a feeling he already knew the answer.

"I'm fine," Alex replied, his voice monotonous.

Alex kept walking, reaching the bus, his feet squelching in his shoes. But just as he was about to pull on the door to enter, a panicking Katherine pushed the door open screaming.

"Oh no, you don't! You will not be stepping into my mobile HQ looking like a vampire from an awful movie sixties movie! In the van, with the perps! Now!"

Alex looked at her, frowning, but she seemed hell-bent on this. With a sigh, Alex took a step back.

"Better yet, why don't you fly back home? I heard you could do that now," she said, half joking.

But she could see in Alex's face, the exhaustion setting in. She didn't know how much energy all the powers he used took from him, and wasn't about to ask.

But it couldn't have been a small toll.

Alex looked at her, his face reflecting his annoyance, but he walked over to the van, staying quiet. The back of the van in question was still open, and he could see a bunch of the earlier men, still in handcuffs, loaded at the back like prisoners about to be transferred.

When he hopped into the back of the vehicle, taking the last available spot, the merc that was about to hop in to keep the men in place opened his mouth to complain. But an icy gaze from Alexander shut him right up.

Alfred closed the doors, tapping his man on the shoulder.

"Trust me. They aren't about to overpower him. If something, I would be more worried about getting to the compound with no more prisoners alive."

A shiver ran down the merc's spine as he imagined opening the van doors to a bloodbath. He silently prayed that their last passenger behave himself.

Soon after climbing into the back of the van, he felt it shake slightly, a sign that it had gotten into motion. A contingent of vans and a bus left the outside of the Bianchi residence, leaving only a few other vans, in which the cleaning crew was getting ready to erase any trace they had been there.

Along the ride, Alex closed his eyes to grab a quick power nap, unafraid of the goons and thugs around him. If a single one of them tried something, it would be their loss.

A few of the criminals had the fleeting thought of trying something, while Alexander was heart breathing deeply, his slumber unabated by the surrounding danger. But as soon as they moved, a presence deep inside Alex pulsed a wave of mana, sending but a single image and sound into their minds.

The sound of an enormous wolf growling, along with a set of deep blue eyes, staring right into their heads. The few that had any funny ideas immediately sat back down, their bodies shaking in terror.

Most of them were toughened men, with more than one death under their name. But something about the mental pressure applied from that stare, along with the instinctual reaction to its growl, made them understand they were not predators in this van.

They were prey.

The rest of the trip was rather uneventful, as the van shook slightly to the potholes of Montreal, reaching a small building in an industrial part of the city. On the building, a large name in dark blue lettering was visible, standing out on the black glass facade.

Bellemare & Delphis Security.

The contingent of vehicles drove around to the back, where they entered a garage door that led inside. And from the interior, they started driving down the underground parking.

Once they had stopped, Alfred went to the van where Alex was and opened the door.

Seeing him sleep, with all the other perps compacted as much as they could toward the front of the van, he chuckled to himself. He was surprised none of them were dead, but relieved at the same time.

This meant he hadn't gone off the deep end yet.

Touching his leg lightly to wake him up, Alfred called out to him.

"Come on, boy, wake up."

As soon as he lightly shoved his thigh, a hand came at him, slightly covered in white fur, along with gleaming black claws, which reflected the light of the underground parking on their sharp edges.

But Alfred was no slouch. His sidearm pulled out just as fast and tucked into Alex's ribs just as the hand reached under his chin.

"Relax, kid. It's just me. We are here."

Alex saw who was disturbing his sleep, and the gun tucked uncomfortably against his side, and smirked.

"Very impressive. One of these days, I'll be faster than you," Alex said, his arm returning to normal, as he pulled it back, stretching himself.

Alfred returned his cocky smirk.

"Maybe one day. But for now, know that I can still kick your ass if you make me waste time. Come on, I have a job to do."

Alex looked at the perps in the van and understood he meant them, so he chuckled as he hopped out of the back of the vehicle.

"Sorry. I didn't want to get in your way. Just taking a nap."

Alfred waved his hand dismissively as he called out to one of his mercs.

"Talbot! Show the kid where the showers are and get him a spare uniform to change into. Mr. Bellemare will want to get a full debrief before he leaves. And I can't in my right mind send the kid upstairs looking like he bathed inside his enemies."

Talbot, the young woman who had tried defending her colleague earlier that day, saluted Alfred.

"Yes, sir!"

She then motioned for Alex to follow her as she walked away.

Alex now realized he recognized their uniforms. It was the same uniforms as the ones from the underground compound, under Jack's private hospital.

'Is that how they know each other?' he wondered, as he followed behind the stocky woman.

#### Chapter 670 Reaching The Compound

She walked toward a small elevator and got on. Alex followed in, and the woman put her hand on a scanning pad before the elevator dinged and started going down.

Alex was curious how many sub-levels this company had, but he could tell there were a few.

There were no numbers in the elevator, so he had no idea how fast it went down, or how far down it went, but when he felt a little pop in his ear, he knew they were deep because the atmospheric pressure had changed.

Using his excellent memory, he remembered from his science classes in high school that this only happened after reaching almost a kilometre of depth underground.

Alex felt the elevator slow down and understood they had reached their destination.

\*Ding!\*

As the elevator doors parted, bright artificial lighting greeted them both, along with the sound of gunshots and shouts.

Alex fell on high alert, but the calmness of the woman next to him, as she unboarded the elevator, made him realize he was over-reacting.

He followed her off the lift, as the doors shut and he heard it zoom upward once again. The air he breathed in smelled fresh, yet stale at the same time.

'Air scrubbers. This is a facility cut off from the top side apart from that elevator,' he surmised.

The woman walked up to a railing and stretched her body casually, looking down on something.

"Ahh! Home sweet home," she said, before turning to Alexander and straightening up again.

"Alright, follow me, Mr. Leduc. The barracks are this way. That's where you'll shower, while I grab you a uniform in the armoury."

Alex nodded his head, but before following her, he walked over to the railing to see what she was looking at.

And under his gaze, a massive underground compound with various areas revealed itself. From up there, he could see a cafeteria, a gym, a sparing center, and even some military training facilities from which the gunshots were coming.

All of this was across what looked like an incredibly thick glass pane.

Alex's breath escaped him for a second as he took in the sights.

'Just how many underground facilities does this damned city have?!' he wondered, his mind still not grasping the size of this.

Building these without alerting the whole world to it must have cost billions of dollars. And for what?

A training center off-grid, that the government couldn't legislate or control?

It seemed like overkill.

But he was in no position to start and shove his nose where it didn't belong. He was too busy, anyway.

"Come on, Mr. Leduc. I have other matters to attend to. I can't be babysitting you all day."

The woman's voice brought Alex out of his thoughts, and he rushed after her, apologizing for his daydreaming.

Now that she interacted a bit with him, Talbot thought he wasn't such a bad guy. Hell, he was a handsome bad guy, if he was one.

But his demeanour had changed ever since they left the Bianchi mansion, and she felt more at ease around him. Like the darkness he had displayed earlier was gone.

Like the ice around his heart had melted away, letting a warmer person out.

She led him to the barracks, and pointed him to the showers, before leaving again, heading to the armoury.

The old coot in the armoury tried chewing her up for asking for a new uniform. But when she told him it was for a visitor, under Alfred's orders, he quickly changed his tune.

"Of course, young lady. Anything for a guest of his. Does he need a weapon as well? Or just the one uniform? Maybe he wants an extra one, just in case?"

Talbot almost laughed at his attitude change, but insisted on only the one uniform. Once she had what she asked for, she rushed back to the showers.

She doubted the kid would be done washing out the blood from his hair, but she didn't want to keep him waiting, either.

As she entered the barracks again, she walked toward the showering area. The showers here were mixed, since as soldiers, they had seen each other in much worse conditions than their birth suit.

But as she spun around the corner, she bumped into someone, slightly kneeing them in the crotch.

With an 'Oof!' the man backed away, but dropped his towel, as he grabbed his balls that had just been turbo-smacked.

"Aww, man. That hurt," Alex complained, slightly bent at the waist.

Talbot, on the other hand, now had a complete view of the young man. And what caught her eye was not the schlong in Alex's hand, but rather, the immense burn marks on his back, which his bent position did nothing to hide.

"What the... What happened to your back, kid?" she asked, confused at what could have caused this.

She had seen burns like these before, although not as detailed. These were third-degree burns.

But they were so artistically formed that she wondered just what had caused them. Had he been tortured as a kid?"

Alex raised his head, noticing what she was referring to.

"Hmm? Oh, these things? Would you believe me if I said inside a game?"

He wanted to chuckle to make her understand there was nothing bad about it. But the woman frowned at the words that came out of his mouth.

"What kind of sick game involves burning someone like that?"

Alex quickly understood what she was thinking.

"Oh, no. No, no, no. This wasn't caused by someone. I assure you these come from a game. They come from inside New Eden, just as the rest of my abilities do."

Talbot looked at him like he was a phony. She threw him the uniform and just stepped out of the barracks.

"Get dressed. The boss wants to see you up top," she hollered as she left.

Alex was left there, feeling like she had misunderstood him, and sighed.

"No wonder she didn't believe me. It sounds crazy even to me..."

But he had no time to wallow. He knew that Richard was not the most patient, and he preferred not to keep him waiting too much.

'At least, this is almost over,' he thought to himself.