

## **Zompiewolf 181**

### Chapter 181 Lucifer's Confession (2)

a noble getting manhandled by a... child. It was a rare sight to behold. None of the nobles had ever been exposed to such a humiliating situation. But now, it was happening right in front of their eyes.

Three of the guards the noble in question had brought along himself immediately rushed to their lord's aide. Big mistake. Despite busting the face of the man, Ashton had been careful not to cause any long term damage to the man. However, he didn't need to do the same with their guards.

While the guards moved in to attack Ashton, his team and the royal guards remained at their positions. They were confident that handling a bunch of 'guards' would be a piece of cake for Ashton.

Ashton immediately let go of the man and lunged at the guards. He punched the guard closest to him in the abdomen with such force, everyone could hear the noise of his spine snapping in half as he threw up a mouthful of blood.

Seeing the might of his fists the two other halted, not knowing whether the pride of their lord was worth getting paralyzed over. But the decision of their fates was no longer in their hands. Ashton was going to be the one deciding their future.

But before Ashton could even put his hand on his next target, he fainted in fear while the remaining guard lost all will to fight against him.

Ashton couldn't help but feel disappointed. These guards were supposed to be strong-willed and prepared to die at any moment to save their employer. Not to accept defeat even before the fight begins.

"Pathetic..." Ashton shook his head before turning towards the nobles, "Anyone else wanna play?"

"W-Who do you think you are?" The Gruntas exclaimed together.

"I knew you were fools, but I didn't take you to be blind as well. Can't you see this?" Ashton rolled his eyes while tapping on the royal insignia engraved on his armour.

All the looks of resistance and hostility dropped in a second and instead, was replaced by that of fear and uncertainties. How could a kid like him have the royal insignia on him? Most of them didn't even have one and they had been working for the king for much longer than the boy was even born.

Suddenly, the presence of royal guards and the kid's aggressive behaviour made sense. With the king's support behind him, it was obvious, he would do something like this.

"Just because you have his highness' backing, doesn't mean you'll do whatever you please. The King would not be pleased to learn about this-"

"You wanna talk to the king? That can be easily arranged. Here let me call him up real quick."

Ashton took out his communicator and furiously began pressing numbers. Obviously, he was simply baiting them into thinking he could call someone like Jonathan whenever he pleased. But they didn't need to know that.

Just the confidence in Ashton's eyes was enough to make them believe his words. In mere moments, Ashton was able to assert his dominance over the nobles, by both showing off his brawns and brains. And soon, his gamble paid off.

"P-Please, can't we discuss this peacefully?" Mrs Grunta spoke up on behalf of her husband.

"Oh, you wanted to short this mess peacefully? You should have said so then!" Ashton smiled and put his communicator away, "Who the fuck do you think you are to offer me peace? You remember me, don't you?"

"Of course..."

"Then do I need to remind you what you people did to me? I might not know who was the main culprit, but I do know some of you wanted to kill me while I was recovering back in the infirmary."

All of the nobles there acted shocked and for some strange reason, it felt genuine. As if they weren't aware of what Ashton was talking about.

Ashton ignored their confused faces and continued, "If you want your kids to remain unharmed, then I suggest you find that person and bring them to me. If not... well, then I guess your noble brats will have to enjoy the rest of their time left in academy inside a prison cell."

"You can't do this!? This is immoral!" Mr Grunta suddenly found his voice again. But he did so at the wrong time.

"Immoral? What the hell do you mean it's immoral?" Ashtin was confused whether he should laugh at the man's hypocrisy or just slap him senseless, "But first, tell me... do you even know what that word means?"

"..."

"Thought so. Now get your asses out of my sight, or you'll find your head, inside your wife's ass in a moment."

Hearing him say those words so nonchalantly, made Fae chuckle while the rest of them tried their best to resist giving any reaction.

Ashton didn't spare another moment on the nobles and headed inside the administrative building while the guards escorted the nobles out. The next step was to ask some questions to the professors. But before that could happen... Ashton heard Lucifer's voice inside his head.

[That was quite the show, Mr Tribid. I heard you wanted to talk about something?]

"Why don't you people get started without me? I'm a bit heated so, I think I should calm my nerves down a bit first." Ashton ignored Lucifer and instructed his squad before making his way back to his old room.

'What's happening to me?' He asked Lucifer.

[What do you mean? You seem fine to me.]

'Don't you dare beat around the bush. Something is wrong inside me and you know it.'

Silence... the more the people ignored him, the more frustrated Ashton was getting. He came back to Contingent to look for some answers but all he was receiving was silence. And now he was getting pissed.

[Before I tell you anything, you need to tell me exactly what happened.]

Ashton took a deep breath and told Lucifer everything that happened on the island. How he didn't remember finishing the quest, and yet he had and also got a variety of rewards.

[This... this is happening much earlier than we had anticipated.]

"For fuck's sake... tell me what's happening to me?"

[I have a confession to make... you better get seated first.]

## Chapter 182 Lucifer's Confession (3)

"I can't tell you much because you don't have the clearance to know about these things. To obtain the said... clearance, you will have to level up and evolve your intelligence." Lucifer informed Ashton before anything was discussed between them.

"Just tell me what you can..."

Ashton found Lucifer's remarks a bit strange, but then again, everything about him was strange, to begin with. So he accepted whatever the famed administrator could tell him in hopes that it would at least answer his main concern.

Lucifer's tale began half a millennium ago. Back when humans were still ruling over Earth doing whatever they pleased to as a society. They were on an inevitable path of self-destruction and if someone didn't stop them, they would perish like countless planets and species before them.

The humans weren't aware of it, but there was a species called The Xyrans, the ones they referred to as the 'admins' nowadays, who had been keeping an eye on them pretty much since homo sapiens came into being.

But to the Xyrans, humans were just of the countless species with their controlled space. While some Xyrans saw potential in humanity, to the rest of them, humans were just another primitive species like many before them.

As humanity slowly crawled its way towards its certain demise, Xyrans found themselves split on what to do with them. There were some Xyrans who wanted to 'save' the humans by capturing them and running earth on their behalf.

Then there were those who wanted to help them stabilise their planet without causing any bloodshed and through knowledge and science. At last came those who wanted nothing to do with the humans, stating, 'the earth was better off without the humans.'

Lucifer and a few of his friends were part of the second group amongst the Xyrans and were the weakest faction as they had the least number of people on their side.

Why did the Xyrans not want to spend their precious resources trying to 'help' a planet? Simply because it was considered 'wasteful', as the humans would simply repeat the cycle like they had countless times before.

But another fact also contributed to their decision of not helping the humans take care of their mess. Despite having insanely high intelligence, Xyrans were a species that craved violence and war.

However, fighting humanity would be like hurling a supermassive black hole towards a star system that wasn't even formed yet. In other words... humanity would get rekked in the blink of an eye and none of the Xyrans wanted that.

What they did want was to have some fun with the humans. Hence they decided to force them to evolve into something more... all the while forcing them to do something that was morally wrong.

They made a virus that would stimulate the dormant cells lying within a human's body and force them to become something more.

This prompted the Xyrans to capture live specimens through the years 1947 to early 2000s, according to the human calendar, and experiment on them... something that would inevitably kill most of the specimen.

Those who survived had their memories altered and either let go of or forced into their intergalactic zoos. Some of the higher-ranking Xyran officials even had them as slaves and pets.

"I and numerous others protested against this but against the voice of the majority, we were inevitably silenced... all but one person. My friend called... Astaroth." Lucifer sighed as he remembered his long lost friend.

He continued, "That bastard had the willpower like no one had ever seen before... but he was deluded to think he could take everyone on by himself. Something he paid the price for... quite dearly."

"Yeah... it's a sad story but what does it have to do with me?"

Ashton was getting a bit impatient listening to Lucifer reminisce. To him, nothing Lucifer had told till now was of any substance. Others might die to hear all this information, especially Professor Bancroft, but Ashton did not have enough patience to listen to the prologue of some alien race and their regret.

"It affects you because Astaroth lives inside you. That bastard was supposed to be dead... but he isn't. If any other admin finds out about this, they will kill you in order to kill him." Lucifer spoke calmly, but judging by his voice he seemed a bit... on the edge, "Shit, they are here. I'm afraid I have told you too much."



Lucifer hastily said a couple of more things before going back to radio silence, "I can't tell you anything else for now. I don't know how he took control of your body, but it's the only explanation of what happened to you. You will have to evolve if you want to know more-"

Silence... Lucifer dropped an earth-sized nuke on Ashton's head before disappearing into thin air just like the countless times before. Even though he got the answer he was looking for, Ashton was more confused than ever...

Hell, he wasn't half as confused as he was shocked. How could two different people live inside a single body? That too, when they belong to different species? Ashton was numb... he didn't know what to think or feel at the moment.

He was... clueless regarding what the future held in store for him.

From what Lucifer told him, this Astaroth guy seemed to have his own ideals and agenda he would love to follow. One of which was saving humans for fuck's sake. It was something Ashton wasn't concerned about in the least.

The only thing he did care about was vengeance and getting back at everyone who had wronged him.

"What if I lose control next time? Would I even be able to get back in control or not?"

All of a sudden a plethora of questions flooded his mind. The more he thought about it, the more questions revealed themselves. Could he even trust this guy to not get him killed? What will happen to him and those around him when Astaroth took control over his body again?

But among all of these questions, Ashton had a few answers. The last time Astaroth appeared was when he was previously wounded and on the verge of dying. So... if Ashton could prevent such a condition from arising again, he should be fine.

Also, the only way of accomplishing that was to get stronger so that he never ends up in a position like before. Secondly, he needed to evolve, which coincided with him getting strong. As long as he could evolve, Lucifer will have more answers to his questions...

'Getting stronger is the only thing in my control.' Ashton somehow calmed his nerves, 'But FUCK this shit...'

#### Chapter 183 Brewing Conflict (1)

The week passed quicker than ever before. Ever since his conversation with Lucifer, Ashton was solely focused on getting stronger and as a result... there were frequent visits to the Black Market. Under a different guise, obviously. However, the exp he received for 'defeating' his opponents was minuscule and barely put a dent on his levels.

Ashton then thought of buying skills, but it was as useless as making Baiter admit to the absurdity of his name. For starters, it was difficult to find something that complimented his existing skillset as for the weapons... well there wasn't anything that attracted his attention.

Even the 'Grimoire' and Skill book Ashton had in his inventory were more or less useless to him. Mainly because he wasn't a creationist, thus he wasn't able to use the skill book for himself.

Secondly, the secrets inside the grimoire were hidden behind a condition. A condition which Ashton could call nothing but ridiculous. In order to open the grimoire in the first place, he needed to have at least 300 intelligence.

Even with Grim reaper's set on, his intelligence could only get to the 110 mark. Which meant... his plan of getting stronger using the resources available to him was a bust.

As days passed things had calmed down a bit in the academy. Ashton's team was making sure no one was doing something they shouldn't have. As for the interrogations were concerned, some professors had quite a few things to say.

While Ashton wasn't paying attention to the interrogations, most of the professors who he had seen smiling were evading his question. However, the moment he got serious about it, flood gates opened.

Names of multiple high ranking noble families came forward. Most prominent among them were the Gruntas and a few others. Their motive? To establish themselves as royalty by using the disarray in the higher society to their advantage.

To say that Jonathan wasn't pleased to hear all this crap would be an understatement. Yet, it seemed his bloodlust had died down a bit. The Gruntas were punished, but as for the professors of the academy, only the director or the council of representatives from the Five werewolf kingdoms could punish them.

As for Rose... she hadn't spoken a word to anyone. Not even Ashton. It seemed she was hiding something but wasn't going to tell anyone about what was going on inside her head.

All in all, things were getting a bit boring for him. However, there was one thing he had been looking forward to. The meeting with the unknown person. Ashton was more or less sure the director was dead. Even if she wasn't she would be on the verge of dying.

"Dead or not, I have to find her..."

\*\*\*

At the same time on the opposite edge of the city, something weird was going on. The news of the director's disappearance had been made public so that anyone having any information regarding her could come forward.

No one came forward with any information, but instead, some troublemakers did. The fabled academy of Contingent had a sister academy. An academy where the heirs of small vampire kingdoms learned more about their own strengths.

Since they had a volatile relationship with the werewolves, and also that their day cycles were different, they hardly ever mingled with the rest of the city. There was also the fact that the vampires studying within the academy had everything readily available within their campus. From blood to weapons, everything.

However... some within the academy were there to do more than... study and grow. They were there to spy on their fellow werewolves and wait for an opportune moment to strike.

You see, despite agreeing to remain peaceful with each other, both the werewolves and the vampires had grudges they couldn't let go of. Grudges that had ruined countless families and friendships.

One such person was standing in the middle of a dark room, surrounded by seven holographic screens. Each screen was showing the shadow of a person, but their faces were hidden.

"I assume your plans failed... Countess Camila." A voice echoed in the darkroom, "I had high hopes for this... plan of yours. But alas... I was being too optimistic."

"Enough of your crying Vritra." Another holographic person sighed, "Let the countess speak for herself. We can reserve our judgement for later."

"There's no need to protect me, Lady Zara." The white-haired lady standing in the middle boldly stated, "My plan to ruin the werewolf academy failed and therefore it's only fair that I face the consequences."

"As much as you want us to hold you accountable, it simply isn't in our interest to do such a thing." yet another masculine voice was heard in the chamber, "If anything, it would only deter us from finding a way to get rid of those rabid bastards."

"I don't think that would be possible anymore." Camilla responded, "At least not in a sneaky way. Our alliance with the conundrum helped us a lot. They gave us the information we could never imagine getting our hands on... but that's all they could do for us."

"What do you mean?" Zara asked the countess.

"Before taking down all of the empires, we need to take over Lycania and I'm afraid we won't be able to do so without engaging in an all-out war. Ever since the Conundrum's betrayal, Jonathan has been carefully eliminating anyone that could potentially have a link with us."

Camilla continued, "I'm afraid he already knows more about us than we know about him. If we don't attack him now, he'll come at us with full force. He could even persuade a couple of other kingdoms to join in destroying Vania."

For the next couple of minutes, no one spoke. All of them were busy reflecting on the problem by themselves. Then someone seemingly of higher standing than all of them spoke up.

"waging a war without a proper reason might enrage the overlord. If that happened... he wouldn't hesitate in killing us all to reinforce his decision of peace with the other races." The man spoke in a hoarse voice, "But if... a werewolf was to kill his nephew studying in the academy... then even he wouldn't disagree waging a war."

#### Chapter 184 Brewing Conflict (2)

Ashton was waiting at the entrance of the black market about an hour ago than the mentioned time. Maybe he was anxious to know some answers or maybe he had nothing better to do. His eyes were scanning everyone going in and out of the place.

However, Ashton wasn't being subtle about it, and soon the mercenaries employed as guards for the market had him surrounded.

"State your purpose of visit."

Ashton turned his gaze towards the man in front of him. Standing at 6'9", the dark-skinned man was very hard to get a read on. He had mastered the art of not allowing his expression to reflect what he was thinking.

His waist-long black and white hairs were braided into several ropes, just like his awfully long beard. Despite not showing any emotion, Ashton knew the man had had his fair share of battles. The plethora of scars on the man's face was proof of that.

But the most surprising thing was the slave brand etched across his neck. Meaning, that the man in front of Ashton was once human, just like he was.

"Just waiting for a friend," Ashton replied nonchalantly, "they should be here at any moment now."

"Those eyes of yours doesn't look like they are waiting for a 'friend'." The man mumbled before placing his muscular arm on Ashton's shoulders, "I'll ask you for the last time... what are you doing here?"

Ten level 20 mercenaries, and one level 25. Was it smart for Ashton to try and take them all down? Of course not. The mercenaries in front of him weren't the only security personnel the market had to offer.

Throughout his countless visits, he had seen more than a hundred mercenaries patrolling the streets. One could only imagine how many of them would be hiding in the shadows.

If Ashton still decided to fight them, not only would he get his ass handed to him by the mercenaries, he would forever ruin his relationship with the owners of the market. Meaning... bye-bye free weapons and exp.

"I'm not scared of you. Not one bit." Ashton pushed the man's hand off of his shoulder, "But I didn't lie before. I am waiting for someone whom I would like to think of as a friend. If you still want to cause an issue, then I guess your employers don't wish to peacefully continue doing their... business."

Ashton's words took the soldiers by surprise. Usually, when they surrounded someone and threaten them like that, they would almost piss their pants and beg to get away. But this kid was openly challenging them? What kind of substance was the kid smoking?

However, the look on the man's face remained unchanged. A kid disrespected him, and yet he was silent. But all that changed a moment later.

"Haha! You're just like I was informed." The man laughed and patted Ashton's shoulders, "A white-haired boy who doesn't know the difference between bravery and stupidity."

"Eh?"

"Don't look so surprised Ashton Bismark. The owners were expecting your attendance, but I was told to confirm your identity before letting you in."

"The owners? Wait, they were the ones to-"

"Not here." The man stopped Ashton in a hushed tone, "There are too many ears here. Follow me and you'll know what you want to."



Ashton was sceptical about it, but if the mercs wanted him to follow them, there wasn't much he could have done. Also, Ashton immediately used [Heartbeat sense] to check whether the man was lying or not and it didn't seem like he was.

So he followed them into the restricted area. It was the central part of the market and was surrounded by more guards than any other place. No one was allowed to even get close to this place, let alone walk into the building.

Once inside, a bracelet was placed on his wrist. Similar to the one he was forced to wear during the entrance examination. It would restrict Ashton from accessing his inventory, and by default, his weapons.

"Don't worry, it's a routine procedure. And so is this..." The man reassured Ashton before covering his eyes using a blindfold.

It wasn't a normal blindfold either. It constantly emitted high-intensity light, which meant, Ashton's sensitive sight was pretty much done for if he even tried to open his eyes. The man next to him then grabbed his elbow and guided him inside.

"That'll be all Ian, you can leave Mr Bismark here."

A moment later, the blindfold was lifted off his eyes. Ashton opened and closed his eyes a few times in quick succession to adjust his vision.

"Apologies for the forced welcome. A lady in her prime has to be careful, you know. Predators all around... preying on the weak. Waiting for a chance to catch them off-guard." The lady in front of him stated politely.

Standing 5' 3" tall, this bronze-skinned woman had a mysterious feel about her. Just the way she spoke, made Ashton take a better look at her.

However, as he did that, his discomfort shot up even higher when he saw her wearing a nearly unbuttoned white shirt on top of her raven latex pants, which were complemented by her knee-high boots.

Ashton thought Mera was used to dressing provocatively, but this woman took it to a whole another level. But he couldn't blame her for not buttoning her shirt up. If she even tried to do so, the thin fabric of the shirt wouldn't be able to hold her forthcoming 'personality' inside.

"I don't mind people staring at the two beauties of mine, but can you at least try to be subtle about it?" The lady shook her head, but as she did that, something else shook quite violently as well.

"My apologies," Ashton quickly averted his gaze away from her 'beauties' and looked at her face.

Oddly enough, Ashton hadn't noticed the eye patch she was wearing. That coupled with her fiery hair, made it seem like she was some sort of a pirate. As for her levels... she was the strongest person present in the room as she was at level 30. The highest possible level one could attain without evolving.

"Not to sound rude, but I think we have some business to discuss..." Ashton reminded the lady of the reason why he was there, "If you have any information regarding the director then-"

"If you want to know about someone, it's better to ask them first, don't you think?" The lady then turned towards one of her guards and nodded her head, "Bring her in."

### Chapter 185 Brewing Conflict (3)

Ashton's eyes opened wide as he saw the director was being rolled inside the room in a wheelchair. Unlike how he had remembered her, she looked extremely frail. Almost as if she had aged 50 years in a span of a few weeks. Hell, she could barely hold her head up without any support.

Her entire body was covered in scars and burn marks. Not to mention a couple of missing fingers and patches of missing skin from her face. The worst thing of all was the oxygen mask covering her face. Just with a glance, Ashton realised she had been rescued from the verge of death.

Despite having an awful relationship with her and knowing what she had done, a part of Ashton couldn't help but feel sorry for her. While the rest of him wanted to laugh at her face.

She had her eyes shut close, thus she couldn't see that Ashton was in front of her. However, the next moment, the owner of the market squatted down next to her and whispered something in her ear, she opened her eyes.

"Kar...ma..." The director mumbled in her weak voice while trying her best to smile, "One... day this... had to happen-"

Before she could carry on with her monologue, she began coughing blood. Her condition did not look good at all.

'What the hell could those bastards have possibly done to her?' He thought while the owner gave the director some water, 'She is supposed to be a strong woman. Possibly the strongest female in the kingdom and yet they reduced her to such a pitiful state?'

Ashton's mind was racing like never before. At first, he thought she could be lying to him, but that wasn't the case. The wounds scattered across her body were proof of that.

"Auntie, don't strain yourself." The owner advised, "I can tell him everything if you want me to."

The director nodded, then looked at Ashton with tearful eyes. It looked like she wanted to say something else, but choked on her blood again... before being taken away.

"What the hell happened to her?" Ashton asked the lady, "In her condition, isn't it better if you place her in a hospital or somewhere similar?"

"The treatment she is receiving here is better than those places." The woman sighed heavily, "Then there's the threat of her being killed... considering all that, it's better for her to stay here. By the way, apologies for the late introduction, I'm Calista Vonderheide. Owner of the so-called black market and Aunt Bianca's adoptive niece."

"Adoptive you say..." Ashton smirked, "I would introduce myself too, but I assume you already know about me."

After a moment of awkward silence between the pair, Callista broke the silence.

"I am aware that you have a lot of questions that you want to ask my aunt, but I'm afraid you'll have to wait till she gets a bit better. I don't want to subject her to unnecessary stress at the moment, given her fragile state. But I do have some information your benefactor would be interested in."

"You mean the king?" Ashton asked her to which Callista nodded, "I thought... whatever, go ahead."

The things Ashton heard afterwards were quite... entertaining. Callista was telling everything from the director's perspective back when the conundrum had captured her.

Although, during the tale, there were a few things that didn't make sense. Ashton allowed Callista to tell all that she had to, before interrupting her with the questions.

"How did you rescue the director in the first place? I thought you said no one was aware of her whereabouts?"

"We didn't. She found us." Camilla confidently replied, "She escaped on the day the members were taken into custody by the king. She was there, stuck in a hidden room where they tortured her to get crucial information about anyone and anything they could find. Especially you."

She continued, "For some reason, the members were adamant about killing you so their plan could proceed to the 'next phase'."

Ashton nodded along. After watching how Mike lost his shit during the trial, he knew why the conundrum desperately wanted him dead.

They wanted him dead because they knew he could kill them easily. But Ashton had his suspicion that their idea of him killing them was much different than his idea.

Judging from how hysterical Mike had become during the last few moments of the trial, he did not see Ashton as a simple killing machine. But as a weapon of mass destruction. One that could wipe out entire cities or not kingdoms. As absurd as the idea sounded.

'Let's focus on the problem at hand for now.' Ashton shook his head and carried on with the conversation, "By the next phase you mean overthrowing the king?"

"Indeed. The conundrum had been colluding with the rulers of Vania for a long time. At least that's what Aunt Bianca could gather from the broken conversations she overheard."

She continued, "They plan to cause a conflict then under the guise of aiding Lycania, they would betray the king, get rid of him and then sign a treaty with Vania to seize any and all violence against each other."

"A conflict? What could they possibly do to instigate two kingdoms into warfare?"

"It would take a lot less than you think for a war to break out. Despite having peaceful relationships between the kingdoms, the werewolves and the vampires had always been at odds and always will be."

The look on Callista's face turned serious before talking further, "It wouldn't be wrong for me to say, the power balance between the nations has been quite delicate. Even the slightest nudge on either side could change everything. For better or worse."

"You still didn't answer my question." Ashton was getting a bit agitated, "How will they cause this imbalance that you're talking about?"

"That's the problem. We don't know what they are planning to do. My mercenaries are great when it comes to facing my enemies head-on, but they aren't of much use when it comes to spying."

"Let me guess, you want me to tell all this to his highness so that he could investigate things on his end. Is that it?"

Callista nodded with a charming, yet enigmatic smile, "You catch on quickly."

"But why are you telling me all this when you could have informed him all this by yourself, couldn't you?"

Ashton was taking things cautiously. He couldn't afford to make a hasty decision, especially when it came to Jonathan. No one ever knew when would that psycho decide to kill someone for breakfast.

"Simply because he would trust your words more than any of us," Callista replied with a smile while giving Ashton an uncensored view of the valley of love formed by her chest, "If you did, I would generously reward you."

"No thanks. I'm not interested in older women." Ashton scoffed, "But I will inform his highness about what you told me. What he does with that information, is something he would decide himself."

### Chapter 186 Bloodbath (1)

In a flash, a month passed. Things were pretty much normal at the academy... if one could ignore the routinely patrols Ashton had made compulsory and the lack of students.

By the time Ashton was done investigating the situation, roughly a third of the students from the academy were either in prison or in some sort of confinement. As for those who escaped the academy before Ashton made his move, especially Nick Grunta, were in hiding.

The knights in his team wanted to investigate and bring Nick and the rest of them to justice as well. But Jonathan deemed it unnecessary and called the knights back. After all, he needed them to start preparing for war, just in case, the vampires ended up waging a war against them.

In the meantime, Jonathan had his secret assassins do the spy work in an attempt to find out how the Vanian assholes would try to turn the vampires against Lycania. The information Ashton had delivered Jonathan remained a secret between them and a few others.

After the shit his most trusted minister pulled, Jonathan didn't trust anyone. Therefore, even those actively engaged in training didn't know they were training to fight vampires and not a bunch of night creatures from the swamp.



At the moment, Ashton and Jonathan were witnessing one such drill. The soldiers were brimming with energy, no one would have been able to guess they had already been going on like this for more than 12 hours.

Even after fighting each other for that long, not a single drop of sweat was visible on either of their heads. Their endurance was nothing to laugh at and Ashton finally understood why the royal knights were Jonathan's trump card.

"Your soldiers are... exceptional, your highness." Ashton mumbled softly, not taking his eyes off of the 'artificial' battlefield.

"That they are." Jonathan absentmindedly replied, "But if the 'overlord' makes his move on us, I'm afraid none of them would survive. Also, whatever alliance we have had with the smaller kingdoms run by vampires would be void so that itself is a bit... unnerving."

"I assume your spies confirmed the news I gave you last month?"

Jonathan nodded but remained silent otherwise. The guardians did confirm what Ashton notified him about. Vanian kingdom had made several bulk purchases for weapons and important things such as blood etc, which was peculiar.

It was clear as day that Vania has been preparing for something like this for quite some time now. Whereas, god knows how much time the Lycanians had to prepare for their invasion. Also, the fact that the Vampires were naturally stronger than werewolves didn't help them at all.

"With all due respect, your highness, you could have asked the rest of the werewolf empires for aid." Ashton pointed toward the only thing that came to his mind, "Even though they might be at odds with us if Lycania falls, so will the rest of them."

"I can't give them the explicit proof of what Vania is planning. Or else the lives of my spies would get endangered. I did try to convince them with whatever other proof I could give them. Every single one of them. But those bastards didn't care..."

Jonathan slammed his fist on the railing before continuing, "From what I know about them... they will probably let us fight Vania and then strike down whoever wins the war when we're at our weakest. Since they can't take us down without a proper reason, our defeat will give them the reason they are looking for and turn Lycania into one of their colonies."

Ashton remained quiet. If only they knew what the hell those Vampires were planning, they could have either exposed them or put an end to their sly plans themselves. However, they didn't and that's what put them under so much unnecessary pressure.

From a general perspective, a war seemed unlikely. But all the evidence pointed towards the opposite.

"Enough about this. What about the academy? Michelle spoke highly of you, especially the way you handled everything. It would be a lie if I said I'm impressed." Jonathan patted Ashton's back, "Michelle never speaks good, let alone praises someone, especially someone who once was a human."

Normally Ashton would get annoyed when someone reminded him of his past. Not because he was ashamed of it, in fact, he was quite proud that he was once a useless human. But being reminded that he was a human, reminded him of his parents... which then pissed him off.

However, surprisingly, this time he didn't feel that way. Which was a bit concerning... that anger was the driving force behind his vengeance. If he were to lose it, he would also lose the only purpose his life had.

"Everything is fine. The students are supposed to go on their first subjugation trip as we speak." Ashton replied sincerely.

"I thought you said there weren't enough students for a trip?"

"And I stand by that. There weren't enough werewolf students to go on the trip by themselves." Ashton smirked, "But by adding the vampires from the sister school, they should be more than enough."

"You think it's a wise decision to send two species who are known for their thirst for blood on a trip together?" Jonathan was a bit worried but decided to hear what Ashton had to say for himself before judging him.

"It's not like they are alone. The werewolves outnumber them by 3 to 1. Not to mention, my team, as well as the professors, are with them so there's nothing to be worried about. Also, if anything, this could be a way to show the overlord or whoever he is that we want peace with them. Not a war."

Jonathan shook his head. Ashton's head was in the right place, and so was his reasoning. But if anything went wrong inside the dungeon, then the situation might as well act as the catalyst to spark the war. He wasted no time in conveying his thoughts to Ashton.

"That's what I am hoping for..." Ashton smiled like a crazed bastard, "I didn't want to admit it... but I am hoping those bastards would think of this as an opportunity to cause a mess. It's the perfect lure... the moment they step out of the shadows, I'll hunt them down."

## Chapter 187 Bloodbath (2)

"Don't get so full of yourself." Jonathan warned Ashton, "Confidence is good, but overconfidence can take you down in a mere moment. I'm speaking from a place of experience."

'Ashton smiled and nodded his head. At times he forgets that no one knows he's a tribrid. If they did, they'd know why he was confident in his abilities. In a way, it was good everyone underestimated him.

Most of his enemies would take Ashton to be an easy target and attack him, only to fail and become his lunch. In fact, he was hoping something like that to happen. But for now, he would stay in the shadows, giving his targets enough time to spring a trap.

"I'll take your leave now," Ashton proceeded towards the exit, "if I am successful, you might not need to put your soldiers in action."

"Godspeed, young man... godspeed." Jonathan sent Ashton off with a nod.

\*\*\*

A couple of hours later, the sun had disappeared, after bleaching the sky red. The werewolves were ready to leave for the subjugation question. There were around twenty of them, excluding the professors and Ashton's teammates.

Since their numbers weren't enough, a handful of other low-ranking students who wanted to experience the hunt had joined them. And now they were waiting for the vampires to show up.

Since the vampires were included in subjugation, it was obvious the hunt would have to take place during the night. However, not too many werewolves were pleased about ruining their sleeping schedule because of them. Frankly... none of them wanted to work with vampires. But given the situation, they were being forced to do so.

"They are here," Virgil mumbled as soon as he got a whiff of the vampires' offensive smell.

The smell of vampires was naturally repulsive to werewolves and vice-versa. Frankly, nobody knew what was going on inside Ashton's head when he proposed the idea, proposing them to work together as if they needed to get to know each other.

Something was bound to happen if the werewolves and vampires stayed together for longer periods of time. It was simply in their nature to rip each other's hearts out the moment they got close to each other. Maybe Ashton wanted them to learn and control that urge? It was possible that was his goal.

"My name's Virgil, I'll be leading the pups. Hope we can get along through this... ordeal." Virgil introduced himself while extending his hand while trying desperately to not cover his nose with the other one.

The lady in front of him looked at him for an inappropriate amount of time before introducing herself as well.

"I'll countess Camilla, the director of Vampiric academy of magic and warfare." Camilla wrapped her fingers around Virgil's hand while stroking it seductively, "I'm looking forward to... working on you- I meant, working with you."

Well, in her defence, whatever she did could be considered seductive. And judging by her choice of... lingerie- armour, it was evident she was there to do more than just guide her students.

Her 'armour' was full of unnecessary openings, giving her spectators a clear view into her ashen skin, while only covering the body parts which it absolutely had to. In fact, whatever she was covering could be easily seen through with help of some creative imagination.

Her long slender legs were covered with the help of black thigh-high boots. As for her neckline... it was quite an objectionable thing to wear around children as it stretched down all the way to her navel area, where it became one with the tiny piece of cloth that was covering her crotch.

To top it all off, the 'armour' was entirely backless and was supported with a thin thread wrapped around her neck.

Behind Camilla stood around 25 vampires, 20 of whom were in their uniforms while the rest of them were their professors. To nobody's surprise, except one, all of the professors were female and wore similar armour as the one Camilla wore.

Their choice of clothing, made Virgil question whether he was headed in a dungeon or in a brothel. The only ones who actually had proper armour on were the male professor and the students.

'Ashton was right. These suckers are definitely planning on doing something.' Virgil thought while shaking Camilla's hand, 'She is actively trying to charm me into doing her bidding. If it wasn't for the armour Ashton gave to me, I would probably be licking the dirt off of her boots by now.'

Ashton had already conveyed what he knew about the vampire's plans to Virgil. For obvious reasons, he didn't go into much detail, but he told him enough to make Virgil stand on his toes.

Since a vampire's charm was one of their many passive weapons, Ashton decided to give Virgil one of his armours that granted Virgil immunity from being charmed while boosting his defensive capabilities.

The rest of the party members were given potions especially crafted by professor Kakaroff for the same purpose. Since each potion was effective for around three hours, they had already gulped down one each to protect them from 'falling in love' with the vampires.

"If you don't mind, could we get going? The sunlight might be weak, but it could still harm us over time." Camilla mumbled in Virgil's ears.

"Ahem... sure. This way please." Virgil guided them towards the nearest portal before debriefing the students, "Alright, now that everyone is here, listen up! Tonight we are going to take down a village infested with ghouls."

As soon as the name of ghouls escaped Virgil's mouth, the red-eyed vampires began whispering to each other. At the same time, multiple hands shot up to ask the most obvious question... why were they fighting ghouls?

"I thought we were supposed to fight Night Creatures? Why the sudden change in plans?" One of the students asked.

"Who told you that? I don't think I ever mentioned where or who, your students were going to fight?" Virgil stared at Camilla with confusion, "Madam Camilla, I suppose your students usually fight night creatures every year and thus they are saying this?"

"You are right." Camilla nodded along even though that wasn't the truth, "Every year we fight night creatures, which might be the reason the students assumed that was what we were going to do this year as well."

Virgil nodded, knowing that Camilla was lying. They had intentionally spread misinformation among different groups of students from the werewolf academy regarding what type of creatures they were going to fight, while not telling what they were going to fight against.

It was yet another one of Ashton's ideas to figure out whether there were any informants within the werewolves or not. Judging from what the Vampires thought they were going up against, it'll be easier to find out who the traitor was among them.

"From the information, I received earlier from the guild earlier today, the average level of these ghouls is estimated to be around 3-4. Therefore, you don't need to be worried."

Virgil continued, "Even then if you're worried or you feel like you can't win on your own, your professors will be around to help you out. With that being said, let's get going before it's too late. I'll inform you about the rest as we make our way towards the abandoned village."



Upon arrival at the desolated village, the students were quickly divided into groups of four. In each team, there were two students from each academy. This was another stipulation no one had previously agreed to.

But right then and there, professors from either academy thought it was a good idea as it would help the students keep each other in check.

Furthermore, each team was accompanied by either a professor from the werewolf academy or from the vampire academy. Oddly enough, Camilla was quite insistent on being the overseer of one particular group.

At a glance, there wasn't anything special about the group. The two werewolves in the team were low-rankers, which meant one of the vampire students must have been a highly valued person. Or at least he would be related to someone of high standing.

Virgil couldn't force Camilla to do otherwise, therefore he accepted his defeat and went on to head another team. The subjugation quest soon turned into a makeshift competition. Everyone wanted to know which team was the best and thus everyone was drowned in the spirit of competitiveness.

Each team was assigned a particular area. None of the teams was allowed to enter a different team's zone until and unless the Overseers from both the teams allowed them to do so. The team that scored the most kills before sunrise would get a special reward.

However... not everyone there was looking forward to the reward...

"Fucking hell... why did we have to be the ones to get burdened with these useless bastards." A crimson-haired vampire complained to his fellow team member, "Look at them... they don't even have any proper skills! How are they supposed to fight?"

"Calm down Kai. It isn't that bad. Just look at it this way, we got two porters to carry our stuff. They are more or less like servants we used to have in Vania." Kai's raven-haired partner, Nico smirked, "Also, this is the best time to show them why the vampires are naturally more powerful than them!"

Kai and Nico were leading the team, while the werewolves treaded behind. They could hear every single word those vampires were saying, and despite feeling rage boiling up within them, they couldn't do anything.

Why? Because what those vampires were saying was a 100% true. They weren't even strong enough to take down their peers. How the hell were they supposed to fight with the vampires?

On top of that, their overseer was the director of the vampire academy herself. If they even tried to do anything... things would not end up good for them.

Had there been a professor from their academy appointed as their overseer, they wouldn't have hesitated before teaching those loud-mouthed blood-sucking bitches a lesson they would never forget.

Since Camilla wasn't stopping her students from bashing the morale of their teammates, the werewolves decided to do the only thing they could in that situation... look around the desolated place that had once been the hub for business. At least when the humans were in charge of the place.

The place was once called Brafast. The network of roads that led to Brafast was torn to pieces by the elements of nature. The grass had filled the labyrinth of cracks while the sand had covered whatever was left.

Broken branches and leaves covered the roads inside the town while the tall grasses of the unkempt gardens swayed in the wind.

Most doors still stood in their frames as if nothing had changed. However, quite a few were ajar for one reason or another, perhaps left open in a hurry. Clothing, home appliances and other belongings were left lost and broken outside some of the homes. They were of no use to anyone anymore.

Brafast, once a major hub for new businesses and young families was but a hollow shell of its former self. The air which was once filled with the many sounds of a growing community had grown eerily quiet.

The silence was only broken up by the occasional random sound and gust of wind. The train station had collapsed and the tracks were covered in shrubs and fallen branches. Nobody was waiting for the next train anymore, no longer eagerly going to the next destination or waiting for those coming home.

It was a strange feeling to be in the footsteps of so many lives now long forgotten and not knowing what became of the people who once spent their lives here. But even though many buildings had found a new purpose there was just no way this town's former self could ever be restored.

Which was the reason why the werewolves never even tried to repopulate the place. The value of Brafast had been long lost. However, the undead living in the area would think otherwise. For them... new prey had arrived, waiting to be feasted upon.

Soon enough a couple of such ghouls found their way to Kai and Nico's group. As soon as they saw the ghoul, they smiled at each other.

"The first one to kill the ghoul would not have to do any chores after returning to the campus!" Kai smirked and rushed in towards the nearest ghoul. He mumbled something and suddenly, wings popped up out of nowhere on his back.

Before either of the ghouls could even react, he jumped over their heads, wrapped his arms around the neck of the ghoul and cleanly ripped it off of its shoulders as if the neck was detachable from the beginning.

The move was vicious, yet elegant. Even as the rotten blood of the ghoul splattered everywhere, along with tidbits of flesh, at that moment, the werewolves could not help but admire the vampire.

"That isn't fair bitch!" Nico retorted, "You got a head start!"

"Stop whining, loser and take care of the remaining ghoul. Or do you want me to do that for you?" Kai teased Nico, "I can do that, but only if you agree on doing my chores for the rest of the week."

"Get lost!" Nico jokingly punched Kai's shoulder and went ahead to kill the ghoul that was charging toward them.

However, Camilla had no interest in them whatsoever. Instead, she was busy fidgeting with her communicator. A wide smile appeared on her face as she read the text she had just received... 'We're in position. Awaiting orders.'

#### Chapter 189 Bloodbath (4)

"Young Prince, we should get going now." Camilla suggested while looking at Kai, "I have just received a report about an aberrant monster going berserk at the edge of the ghost town."

"Ah, then what are we waiting for? Let's get going. We can leave the ghouls for the rest of these... dogs," Kai stared at the werewolves from the corner of his eyes before Nico and he both began laughing.

Those arrogant brats had been making a joke about them the entire duration they had known each other. The werewolves had been ignoring them till now, but enough was enough.

They were completely aware that taking a step against the vampires on their own would not end up good for them. But as long as they could get a single punch in, they didn't care what happened to them afterwards.

However, what the werewolves failed to count for was Camilla. She was faster than them, and as a result, before the werewolves could reach either Kai or Nico, both of them were swiftly knocked out.

It all happened so quickly, that Kai was baffled. He could not believe those weak-ass punks would dare to charge toward him. Just the thought of dogs touching him, made his skin crawl and made him even angrier.

He rushed over to the fallen werewolves and began kicking them. Nico had to restrain him before Kai accidentally ended up killing them.

"Dude, relax!" He yelled into Kai's ears, "If you kill them, things might get messy!"

"I agree with Nico, prince," Camilla whispered into Kai's ears while stroking his hair, "soiling your feet in their blood isn't worth it."

"Then what do you want me to do? Let them go scot-free?" Kai asked in a somewhat calm voice.

"Accidents are unpredictable, your highness. It can happen to anyone at any time, especially in a place like the one we are in." Camilla said with a hint of a smile, "Rather than killing them here, let's just carry them over to where the aberrant beast is. We can use them to bait it and kill it after it kills them."

"That way... they'll die and no one would suspect us! Nice thinking Countess Camilla. I'll be sure to inform my uncle of the kindness you have shown to me over the months I have known you!" Kai's smile stretched from ear to ear.

"It has been an honour to serve you, your highness. That is enough of a reward for me." Camilla bowed before picking up the were mutts, "Let's get going now before the creature disappears."

As they hurried to the isolated edge of the town, Nico could feel something was off. He hadn't seen or heard anything to make him feel that way. But he had a sinking feeling in his gut that something was about to happen... he just couldn't point his finger at it.

Unlike him, Kai didn't have such a feeling as he proudly marched ahead of them. They kept walking and walking and after a while, even Kai could sense something was off. If a monster was around there, then why were things so calm?

It made no sense. Also, who were the people who informed Camilla about the presence of a monster? After all, judging from the map, the area they were in had not been assigned to any of the groups.

However, before he could voice those thoughts, a dozen or so people appeared out of nowhere and surrounded them. All of them had a mask covering their faces but judging by the aura around them, it was clear that they were vampires, just like them.

"What's going on here?" Kai immediately asked Camilla who dumped the unconscious bodies of the werewolves before answering him.

"An accident, your highness. Remember I said accidents can happen to anyone at any time? It can happen to you as well!"

"How dare you!" Kai screamed at the top of his lungs, "You think you'll not face any consequences for what you're doing? Wait till my uncle hears!"

"Oh, you can rest assured. Your uncle, the overlord, would definitely hear about your demise. But he wouldn't know who killed his precious nephew." Camilla smirked, "In the absence of evidence, he will believe whatever I tell him and... blaming it upon those werewolves seems like the right choice."

As she said that, all of the assassins surrounding them began laughing maniacally. Bringing twelve level 25 assassins to kill a couple of level 15 teenagers seemed like overkill, but Camilla did not want to take any chances anymore. As a result, she pulled all the stops this time.

"Do not worry, your highness, your death wouldn't be in vain! It would serve as the catalyst for the global domination of vampires! With your death, your kind would flourish! You will be remembered for generations to come. Isn't that what all of us want?"

"Keep your twisted fantasies to yourself, bitch!" Kai spat out in disgust before getting into a battle stance.

"If you think we'll go down so easily, then you're mistaken!" Nico joined him and stood with his best friend and the one he had sworn to protect, "Forget about getting to the prince, you won't even be able to get past me-"

Nico knew they were outnumbered and outmatched in terms of skill. As a result, there wasn't much he could have done to protect Kai... other than make the assassins target him first in the hopes of making a long enough window for Kai to escape and find help.

Nico's plan succeeded. He had all of their attention to himself, but he could not open a window for Kai to escape...

In a flash, the world turned upside down in front of his eyes. He could see Kai was screaming something at him, but he couldn't hear what he was saying. A moment later, Nico saw his torso... but it felt as if he was seeing it with someone else's eyes.



He was confused but the following moment it all made sense as he touched the ground with a thud. His head was decapitated, and the things he saw in the last couple of moments, were the last thing he would ever see.

"NOOO!" Kai roared as he charged toward the Assassin who took the life of his only friend but was swiftly pulled back. However, it wasn't the assassins or Camilla who did that.

"Shit, that move was quick. I barely had the time to react myself." One of the werewolf academy students whom Camilla had knocked down before was standing in between the assassins and Kai, "I don't like the royal brat, but trying to kill him is a bit too much, don't you think?"

Chapter 190 Bloodbath (5)

"How the hell..." Camilla mumbled absentmindedly before jumping away from the kid, "There's no way you should be awake... I personally made sure to knock you out!"

Enjoying Camilla's bewilderment, the student decided to reveal his true self to the enemies. The boy's face distorted momentarily before rearranging itself to form an entirely new face. His blonde hair turned ashen and so did his skin.

In just a blink of an eye, the identity of the boy changed... Camilla and her hired assassins were shaken by the sudden development, while Kai was down watching everything unfold in horror. Just like his assailants, he had no idea what was going on.

A bunch of vampires, who should be his allies were trying to kill him, while a werewolf, who was supposed to be a rival was trying to protect him? None of it made any sense! However, he wasn't complaining.

Even if the werewolf couldn't protect him, at least he could use him as a meat shield to escape and regroup with the rest of the professors. As long as there were others around him, no matter how strong Camilla was, she would have to retreat.

Intending to put his plan into action, Kai got off his sorry butt and made a break for it. But the moment it seemed he was free from the action, his head collided against an invisible barrier.

It wasn't an ordinary barrier either. Only the people inside the barrier could see or hear each other. While those on the outside would see ordinary scenery. They would only realise that a barrier has been placed there if they accidentally got in contact with it.

But even then, the barrier would still be in place. The only way to get rid of the barrier was to get rid of the one who created it, or if the caster wished for it to happen.

The caster in this case happened to be Camilla who was also inside the barrier. Which meant... until and unless someone inside the barrier either killed her or forced her to dispel it, all of them were staying inside.

"What the hell is this!?" Kai barked in frustration.

"You really thought they would be careless enough to try and kill the Overlord's nephew without taking some measures beforehand?" Ashton shook his head in disappointment, "You're not the brightest lamp, are you? Now shut up and sit quietly while I deal with these suckers."

"You ignored my question?" Camilla raised her eyebrow, "In hindsight, it doesn't matter who you are. After all, you will die here and take the blame for 'killing' Kai. Haha, you made everything a bit easier for us!"

"You think so huh?" Ashton smirked and took out the twin blades, "You think I'm just a brat who just so happened to be here to cause you trouble... don't you?"

None of them answered his question as they were too busy gawking at the twin swords Ashton was wielding.

"Where did you... get those swords?" One of the assassins blurted out.

Ashton could feel the rage in his voice. But even then, he couldn't help but laugh. He found it hilarious that whenever he chose to fight a vampire, they immediately recognised the swords as if it was a relic or something.

But the most amusing thing was if it was such an important weapon, then what the heck was it doing in the hands of a level 10 bloodsucker?

"I'm not in a mood to answer that." Ashton shrugged his shoulders and charged toward the crowd, "But maybe if you get on your knees and beg, I might disclose some details."

Watching him run his way, the assassin who had inquired about the swords, took it upon himself to deal with him. However, in his fit of rage, he forgot to take some obvious things into account. Things like skills and equipment.

[You have been affected by <Lure>. The effectiveness of your skills has dropped by 60%.]

As the notification flashed before the vampire's eyes, it was already too late. His agility skill wouldn't be enough to make him dodge the incoming attack.

He stared at his fellow assassin, his eyes begging for help. Little did he know that everyone single one of them received the same prompt. In a swift move, Ashton had made most of their skills useless. However, even with the effectiveness of their skills down the drain, there were ways to interrupt Ashton.

Camilla immediately cast an elemental spell, hurling a ball of violent wind towards Ashton. Although the spell wasn't strong enough to blow Ashton away, it was enough to ruin his balance, making him fall.

"Tsk, my bad. I forgot you are not an average bunch." Ashton mumbled while brushing the dust off of his shoulder, "You fckers will keep pestering me while protecting each other... what a pain."

The assassins were no longer taking Ashton lightly like before. In just a couple of seconds, he had shown what he was capable of. If they dare to take him lightly, they could potentially lose their heads in a blink of an eye.

"I guess I have no other choice. Well, it won't matter if I killed you all... except for one thing," Ashton suddenly turned towards Kai and threw a needle at him.

Kai tried to dodge the attack but the needle inevitably managed to pierce his shoulder. Within a couple of seconds, he was snoring louder than a panda.

"With that out of the way, let's begin the final massacre." Ashton winked at his enemies before activating all of his genes.

While he was strong enough to take them down one after another, as long as they were together, he wouldn't have been able to deal a decisive blow to any of them. If Ashton wanted to deal with them as swiftly as possible, he needed allies. Thankfully, he had enough of them.

"What in Dracula's name is going on here?" Camilla was baffled, like the rest of them when they felt an unexplainable change happening right in front of their eyes.

They could sense the presence of a Vampire coming from the boy. But that wasn't all... they could even smell the awful scent of rotten blood coming from him as well. They were all familiar with the scent but whatever they were sensing couldn't possibly make any sense!

"How..." That was the only question running through their minds, "How can someone be a werewolf, vampire and undead?"

"Interesting question! You'll have ample time to think about it in the afterlife." Ashton chuckled before activating [Valhalla] to summon Sven and the wolves out.