

Zompiewolf 201

Chapter 201 That Level Of Deception Won't Work Against Me (3)

The silence in the room was louder than it had ever been. All of them had been piling up on the werewolves to show them their place in Transylvania. However, instead, they ended up receiving a tight slap on their faces.

As the heads rolled away from the pile, there was no mistaking it. The heads definitely belonged to vampires. The proof was enough to show them that someone had hired the vampires to attack Kai.

"I believe they were mercenaries hired by Camilla or the ones working from the shadows to kill Lord Kai. A quick investigation should be enough to find who these people are and why they accepted a bounty on someone like Kai. I hope this is enough, your highness."

Ashton replied to Alucard in a respectful voice. Alucard nodded and looked towards Griffin to see if he was satisfied, but it didn't seem like he was.

"That does clear the suspicion of you faking the accident, but a question still remains. Where is Camilla's corpse?"

Unlike everyone else in the throne room, Griffin was unphased by the appearance of the severed heads. He had seen too many of those already, the wars he had been in had turned his nerves into steel, and so was his mind.

"I burned her. That's why nothing of her was left behind." Ashton confidently replied.

He knew pretty much everything about killing vampires. At least those things that Mera was aware of and according to her, burning a vampire wouldn't leave any marks behind. Not even ashes or bones were left behind.

In other words, no one would ever be able to know whether a vampire was killed using fire or not until and unless someone saw it with their own eyes.

For this reason, Ashton chose to lie about the fire rather than some other way as it was the best way to explain the mystery of the missing corpse to them.

However, their reaction to Ashton's claim wasn't what Michelle had expected. As soon as he recounted the tale of fire consuming Camilla, Griffin smirked while the other counts and countesses began laughing like mad people.

"So, you used fire to kill Camilla. Are you sure that's the story you want to stick to?"

"Pretty sure." Ashton nodded his head.

Ashton was sticking to his tale because Griffin was about to fall into his trap. Despite what Mera had told him, Ashton had confirmed the fact with Celeste whether or not it was possible to kill a vampire using fire.

While it was true the flames could kill a vampire, Celeste informed him an ordinary fire won't be able to do much against them. Only fire imbued with mana, also known as Mystic Blue Flame, would be able to kill a vampire.

Ashton had intentionally left this part out in his explanation and didn't mention using the mystic flames, and just said he burned her using 'fire'.

"Then may I ask how did you obtain mystic blue flame to do so?" Griffin asked with a sudden seriousness on his face, but the seriousness turned to bafflement a moment later when Ashton just showed him how.

"I believe this device is capable of doing so?" Ashton took out a lighter from his inventory and threw it toward Griffin.

The latter was shocked into speechlessness. It was no ordinary lighter, but a magical weapon that assassins of their kind used to carry with themselves. It was their favourite way of committing suicide, just in case the enemies wanted to capture them and then torture them into revealing sensitive information.

In fact, Ashton had only picked one of those lighter to keep as memorabilia while he was busy decapitating the five mercenaries. But to his surprise when he showed it to Celeste, she revealed the true purpose of the device which then prompted Ashton to come up with the plan to cover up the mystery of Camilla's missing corpse.

"Do you have any other questions, great knight?" Ashton asked with a poker face, but on the inside, he was trying his hardest not to laugh there after seeing the faces of everyone there.

Griffin shook his head and stepped back. But now it was Ashton's turn to put the vampires in their place... verbally of course. If a fight was to break out then and there, then it wouldn't be in Ashton's favour.

He turned around and Michelle knew he was about to cause a scene there. While she was there to stop something like that from happening, after seeing how well Ashton had handled everything so far, she couldn't help but want to know what he was about to do next.

"I am well aware of the differences between the vampires and the werewolves. But when I saw Lord Kai being attacked by his own kind I realised something..." Ashton boldly began addressing the audience, "Maybe we aren't all that different."

He continued, "You will always look down upon those who are weaker than you. No matter what their actions show, you will always choose to believe whatever is convenient for you. Just like at this moment it was the need to prove me wrong."

Everyone was quiet as Ashton kept poking them over and over with his verbal sword. It hurt especially more to those who were trying to corner him a few moments ago. But other than them, someone else also took notice of his words and decided to interrupt him.

"There is one thing you still need to clear, sir Ashton." Verina, the first princess got up from her throne, "You proved the Vampires were behind the attack, but you never clarified how you managed to kill all of the assailants by yourself."

Ashton was secretly hoping someone would ask the question to him, but he hadn't hoped that the princess would be the one to question him out of everyone present there.

"Hm... considering I am the only witness, as Lord Kai was unconscious and the assailants are dead," Ashton mumbled, "I guess you will need to inject me with a truth serum to confirm what I already told you."

"That won't be necessary." This time Irina, the second princess spoke up, "We can know if you're speaking the truth or not, simply by testing your strength. If you manage to defeat both Verina and I, then you won't need to prove anything to anyone. Would you accept the challenge and prove your greatness?"

"Your highness, that's a bit-" Michelle tried to mitigate the situation but failed.

"I accept your challenge, your highness," Ashton said with a smile before thinking, 'What would be a better way to put these bloodsuckers to their place than by defeating the next rulers of the kingdom.'

Chapter 202 That Level Of Deception Won't Work Against Me (4)

"Are you out of your mind?" Michelle hissed at him but Ashton ignored her.

He did not expect someone like her to know why he was doing what he was doing, even if he explained to her word by word about his plan to smoke out some pussy-wolves.

"So, when do we start?" Ashton asked the princesses with a smile.

"Right NOW!" Verina roared and lunged at him, closely followed by Irina.

Both of them were using rapiers, while not giving Ashton any chance to even retrieve his weapons. The crowd dispersed as the sisters began their relentless attacks. None of them wanted to get caught in a fight that wasn't there and lose a limb or two.

"Wait this goes against the rules of duels!" Michelle did whatever she could to help out Ashton, even though he had caused the mess all by himself.

"Who said it was going to be according to the rules?" Griffin replied and crossed his hands in front of his massive chest, "The assassins who attacked Kai wouldn't have waited for the boy to get ready before attacking him."

Hearing that, Michelle knew she couldn't do anything. After all, Griffin was right. If Ashton wanted to prove that he had the strength to kill 13 vampires all by himself, then he had to be prepared for everything. Including a sudden ambush from multiple enemies.

The only thing she could do was to put her faith in him and hope he actually had a plan for doing all this. The royal knight, on the other hand, didn't know what to do? Their king had sent them along with the Baron to make sure he returned safely.

But judging by what was happening at the moment, it was highly... questionable whether any one of them would be making their way back to Lycania or not.

"The dog is gonna die for sure." One of the counts scoffed, "They aren't the kingdom's brightest swordswomen for nothing. There isn't a single swordmaster throughout the empire in its entirety who hasn't taught them their secret techniques."

"Yeah, the boy is in big trouble. Oh well, he kept running his mouth acting like a king, so it's only fair that he was put to his place by someone."

Ashton could hear all of them talking about how great the two sisters were and to be honest, they weren't that bad. Both of them were at level 30 and probably pursuing their evolution tasks. Which technically made them much stronger than him... that is if he was an ordinary brat.

Despite having wonderful skills, they were getting a bit too confident, all because they weren't allowing him to bring a weapon out of his inventory. As soon as he managed to fool one, the other would jump in to cover for her place. It was so... annoying!

"I gotta admit, your coordination is top class." Ashton praised the sisters as Irina managed to graze his shoulder, "Considering the fact that neither of you spoke a word before attacking me, it's most likely that both of you can read each other's minds."

Alucard was intently watching the duel unfold. He could see Ashton was talented after judging him by his sudden but to-the-point evading manoeuvres. But merely dodging the attacks wouldn't work against his daughters.

"Are you just gonna talk or fight?" Verina smiled before thrusting her sword towards him.

Ashton managed to evade her attack at the last moment but ended up being in Irina's line of fire. It all happened so quickly that no one knew what happened there. Irina had lunged at him and it didn't seem like Ashton would be able to dodge the attack. Yet he was nowhere to be found?

"Where did he go?" Irina cursed through her gritted teeth, looking all over the room.

"Where you looking at?" Ashton's voice echoed through the room, and the next moment, Irina was kicked right in the abdomen.

With one kick she was forced to take a dozen steps backwards before she could regain her balance. Irina was in pain but hid it without much effort. She was... smiling, as soon as she recovered from Ashton's kick.

However, the next moment she disappeared into thin air as if she never existed in the real world. The crowd was baffled but Verina didn't waste any time and rushed in to keep attacking Ashton.

"Nice try, but that level of deception won't work against me..."

Ashton sighed before slipping under Irina, grabbing her hands and threw her towards Verina. Verina couldn't stop her momentum suddenly and was holding her sword in front of her chest.

If she were to collide with Irina like that, her sword would definitely pierce her back. Which meant, Irina would end up getting severely injured.

"Damn it!" Verina cursed under her breath and threw away her rapier as well.

Irina hit her with incredible force and a moment later both of them found themselves kissing the ground.

"Ah, I realise why your moves were synchronous. It's amazing how much of a difference a weapon can make." Ashton mumbled while playing with their swords, "These swords are quite unique. To be able to transmit the wielder's thoughts to the wielder of the other one. The weaponsmith who made this must have been a ruler of all weaponsmiths. Here, you can have them back."

He threw their weapons back toward their owners. The sisters grabbed the swords, but rather than fighting, they put the swords back in their inventory. Confusing everyone in the room except Alucard, who was smiling himself.

"Um... what's going on here?" Ashton voiced what everyone was thinking, "Why did you put your weapons away?"

"Because the fight is already over," Alucard replied and stood between his daughters, "You won."

Alucard then playfully nudged the ladies forward. The sisters took a couple of steps toward him before getting down on one knee. What happened next sent a shockwave of emotions through everyone in the room.

"Ashton Bismark, will you marry us?"

"WHAT!?"

Chapter 203 A Mother's Pain (1)

Why were the princesses proposing to a nobody, that too all of a sudden? Could it be, that it was another one of their strategies to take their opponent by surprise? It was possible, or at least everyone in the room would have thought that.

Ashton was no exception either. At first, he thought their sudden proposal was a way to catch him by surprise. However, with a quick use of [Perception] skill, Ashton was able to determine the truth.

The princesses weren't lying. They were proposing to him with all the correct intentions. They actually wanted to marry him. The situation wasn't something Ashton could have prepared for beforehand... and he wasn't liking it at all.

That being said, the idea of marrying the princesses was a bit tempting. After all, once it was done, no one would be able to take him lightly. He would have freedom like never before. But leaving the werewolves behind wasn't something he could have done just yet. Not without wrapping up the business, he had with them.

"What is going on here?" He finally said something after a couple of minutes, acting all confused.

"In our family, there's a tradition followed by the females." Alucard explained to everyone present in the room, "The females of the family can decide to challenge a person they might see as a suitable partner, to a duel. If the person wins the duel, they also win the right to marry the woman. That's what happened here."

Although the explanation made a bit of sense, the situation was still just as absurd as ever. The sisters eagerly kept looking at him with love and respect in their eyes. While every other guy in the room was looking at him as if they were going to rip him to shreds.

Ashton could understand why the guys felt like that. The sisters were so beautiful they would have even made the heart of a dead person start beating if they were to profess their love to him. No one in their sane mind would have rejected their proposal, but Ashton didn't have a sane mind, did he?

"I'm sorry, but I cannot accept this proposal."

As those words escaped Ashton's mouth, everyone got even more shocked. If the proposal had made them speechless, the rejection made them lose their crap all over again.

The sisters still were on their knees, it seemed they were unable to comprehend being outright rejected like that.

Alucard was the only one with an unreadable expression on his face. But if Ashton were to predict what was Alucard thinking, it would have to be 101 ways he would kill him. As Alucard opened his mouth to speak, Ashton stood motionlessly.

It was for the best if he didn't offend the man any further after 'breaking' his daughter's 'hearts'. But to his surprise, Alucard wasn't pissed at him.

"May I know the reason why you're rejecting them?" He asked Ashton.

Rather than replying to him using words, Ashton decided to show him something, no member of royalty would accept... the slave mark on his hands.

"Would you still want to give your daughters away to someone like me?"

Before Alucard, Irina or Verina could give a reaction, the jealous counts among the crowd began admonishing him. The princess's proposal to a werewolf was already a bit much to handle, but a slave... it was something none of them was going to stand for.

"You really got some guts marking this place with your filth, human!"

It was merely one of the many insults thrown at Ashton and also an attempt to protect their own insecurities at the same time. After all, how could they accept that a mere... human was better than them? But this time, Ashton didn't remain quiet and fired a verbal bullet back in their direction.

"You sure like to bark a lot for someone who isn't even being addressed here. Why don't you shut your mouth and keep sucking your thumb as you have been till now?"

"You..."

"What? Are you afraid of backing your words with your skills?" Ashton kept on taunting the man dressed in a flowery red tuxedo. In all honesty, the man's fashion sense seemed to be one of the many reasons for his annoyance.

All of sudden, more and more people found their backbone and jumped into the fray. They no longer wanted to insult Ashton with words, but their intentions were to make him suffer through the pain of getting mobbed.

Michelle and the knights could feel the tension in the air and rushed to protect Ashton, but the vampires reached Ashton quicker than they could. However, to their surprise, before any of them could even touch Ashton, Irina and Verina jumped in front of him, their rapiers were drawn to kill anyone who dared to take one more step in Ashton's direction.

"You dare break the law in front of the people who made them?" Irina hissed at them, "Discriminatory behaviour against a human is a crime punishable by imprisonment or execution in special cases."

"Whether Sir Ashton accepts our proposal or not," Verina coldly warned everyone, "we have accepted him as our-"

"Irina, Verina, pull your swords back." Alucard instructed her daughter, "As for you, I'll deal with you later. Griffin, escort them to the courtroom for now."

"As you wish..." Griffin nodded towards a bunch of guards who immediately forced them out of there.

Once that was done, Alucard turned his attention once again towards Ashton and repeated his question, "Tell me the real reason, why are you so adamant about not accepting my daughter's proposal?"

"You saw right through me, your highness." Ashton smiled wanly before staring Alucard right in the eyes, "As much as I would love to marry your daughters, I have sworn loyalty to my king, his kingdom and the people of Lycania."

He continued, "I'm afraid, by marrying your daughters I'll be bound to live here. Which would make it impossible for me to protect the ones who care about me."

Alucard's eyebrows raised in admiration for the kid standing in front of him. He wasn't even grown-up, and yet he had his priorities straight. A quality that he appreciated in anyone regardless of their gender or species.

"Is that it?" He asked Ashton who nodded his head, "Fine then, is there anything I could do to help you out with that?"

Ashton couldn't help but smile on the inside. He had to improvise a lot, but he could finally achieve his end goal.

Chapter 204 A Mother's Pain (2)

Ashton finished explaining the story of the conundrum and their escape, with Michelle chiming in to confirm whatever he said was true. It took them a while to explain everything, but soon they were able to show Alucard the complete picture.

"So, if we locate and hand over those people to Lycania, you will be willing to marry my daughters. Is that what you're saying?" Alucard wanted to confirm everything to their minutest detail so that Ashton wouldn't be able to decline the proposal twice in a row.

"That'll make me think about it at least." Ashton gave him a vague reply as usual.

Marrying the princesses wasn't a big deal for him. He could marry them as doing so would give him a lot of political power. But until and unless he was done taking care of the things he needed to, namely killing Mera and finding his parents, marrying someone was going to be the least of his concerns.

Also, he wasn't going to marry someone just because they proposed to him. A relationship like that wasn't anything but a sham.

Initially, he wanted to use Alucard's favour to find out more about his mother, but then he realised he didn't even remember her face and as far as he knew, she might have been given a new name. Just like he was when he got turned into a werewolf. That's why whatever name he remembered wouldn't be useful either.

Without a name or face, it would be impossible to look for someone like that. But now that he had gained access to the vampire kingdoms, he could look for her on his own.

However, finding Conundrum was a task he won't be able to accomplish by himself. Especially since he had no doubt they probably heard about his arrival in the kingdom. If anything, those bastards must have already gone into hiding.

Also, Jonathan wanted him to do something about the conundrum. It was one of the main reasons why he agreed to send his 'treasure' away from his jurisdiction.

"Hm... we should keep the topic aside for now." Alucard mumbled and took out a sword from his inventory, "On your knees, proud warrior!"

Ashton followed his command without any protest. Mainly because he knew what was going to happen next.

Alucard tapped Ashton's shoulders one after another. Officially welcoming him into his kingdom by making him a Templar knight in the Order of Von Dracula Cult. It was a group even high-ranking Vampires had to work hard to merely get into, let alone be granted the position of a Templar Knight.

Therefore, it was no wonder why Ashton was immediately targeted by everyone there. Even though everyone present there was congratulating him, most of them still saw him as someone whose presence was unnecessary there. But alas, they couldn't do anything about it.

However, there was one person who was happier than anyone else present in the room. Avalina couldn't believe what a wonderful man her little boy had grown up to be.

From the way he countered every argument that was thrown his way, to his fighting skills, everything left her in awe. But there was one thing that was troubling her.

Ashton was going by the last name of Bismark... which meant, he now either belonged to the king or the mistress and Avalina couldn't imagine which one of them was worse.

'I'll set everything right, starting now.' Avalina thought as it was her turn to congratulate Ashton.

But fate had something else planned for them as a shockwave was sent throughout the palace, knocking everyone down. It was such a huge force, that the centuries-old tinted glasses finally lost their battle against time and were shattered in a moment.

Avalina fell as well, but Ashton caught her and gently placed her on the floor, "Are you hurt?"

"N-No, thank you for helping me, Son."

Avalina finally summoned all her willpower and did it! She called him son, but Ashton wasn't paying attention to her anymore as a gigantic black coloured portal opened right outside the palace. It was so big, that it shrouded a better part of the palace with darkness.

"What the hell is going on?" Alucard roared at the top of his lungs and Griffin came charging inside the room at once.

"Alucard, it's not looking good," Griffin's voice appeared to be calm but had a sense of urgency hidden within, "An instance dungeon opened up right outside the palace gates. If we don't go inside and clear it, even lord Dracula won't be able to protect the citizens."

"What's an Instance dungeon?" Ashton asked Michelle who was just as clueless as he was.

"It's a rare phenomenon where a portal connected to a dungeon appears out of thin air." Avalina decided to give him some info about the dungeons, "We can get a rough estimate of how what kind of dungeon the portal has linked with based on its colour and size."

She continued, "and judging by the appearance of this dungeon... it could either be an E ranked dungeon with a lot of monsters in it or a D ranked dungeon with fewer but much stronger monsters. If someone does not kill them all, they will get out of the portal and kill everyone on this. It's a kill or be killed kind of scenario!"

Before Ashton could thank her for the information, Alucard grabbed the lady by the hands and pulled her back to her feet, before turning towards his daughters.

"My precious daughters, keep Dr Avalina safe. Her survival is crucial for you know what!" He instructed them. He said a lot of things afterwards but Ashton couldn't hear a word after he mentioned the name Avalina.

It had been over a decade since he had heard someone speak the name. He even thought he heard it wrong but when he got a better look at her, the faded image of his mother buried deep within his head, resurfaced again. There was no doubt. The lady in front of him was his mother.

"Mom!?"

Ashton mumbled softly, but it was enough for Avalina as she smiled at him while tears streamed down her cheeks. She had finally been reunited with his son, albeit only for a short time as she was dragged away to safety.

Chapter 205 Instance Dungeon (1)

Ashton snapped back to reality. He had found his mother, but it was not a great time to chat with her. At the moment, he needed to protect her from getting harmed by the creatures pouring out of the dungeon.

'No one is taking her away from me now... No one.' Ashton thought before heading inside along with Michelle and the royal knights.

No matter how much he wanted to simply rush out and kill the monsters so that he could reunite with his mother, he couldn't do it. He needed to ensure Michelle's safety first or else Jonathan might try to make his life hell...

'It's not like he would be able to do much though, now that I technically also work for the Vampires too.'

Defeating the dungeon took priority over everything. But this dungeon was turning out to be weirder than anything the vampires had ever seen before. Before they could even form a team to enter the dungeon, several trolls rushed out of there.

Although they were rushing out of the portal, it didn't seem like they were a part of the main force. They were more like expendable cannon fodder kind of soldiers sent to the battlefield to either gather intel on the enemy or to delay them from attacking the main base.

Thankfully, Alucard didn't need to assemble his troops. The vampires gathered there for the ceremony were more than capable of fighting their way into the portal. All of them forgot about the disagreement from before and readily jumped to help everyone.

After ensuring Michelle's safety, the royal knights were prepared to help as well. But Ashton instructed them not to. There was no alliance between the werewolves and the vampires. As a result, there was no need for them to unnecessarily participate in the fight.

"Focus on protecting the princess. Since the portals have been disabled as a security procedure, we will have to hold up here." Ashton made his orders very clear, "If she dies, so would we. So try your best."

"What are you going to do?" Michelle asked him, "If you're so worried about my life, you could stay here as well."

"And show the vampires how useless werewolves can be?" Ashton scoffed, "With no due respect, I don't think his highness the king would appreciate that very much."

Saying so, Ashton finally headed outside, before Michelle could give him an appropriate reply. But the moment he did, his mouth was left open wide.

From the inside, the portal only looked big, but now that he was looking at it in all of its glory, the portal was big enough to consume the palace in its entirety.

The courtyard right outside the palace was turned into a battlefield with the vampires battling it out against the monsters. However, not all of the vampires were capable fighters and then there were humans.

There wasn't much these people could do to protect themselves, let alone fight back. As a result, all of them were soon consumed by panic. With no one to guide them to safety, they were being swatted down like insignificant insects.

"Nooo!"

A little human girl screamed in fear as a gigantic Troll rushed toward her. She closed her eyes and braced herself, prepared to take on the monster's attack and possibly die. She waited and waited, however, the blow never came.

The girl slowly opened her eyes to see a man whose hands resembled that of a wolf standing in front of her. His hands were crossed over each other, while the troll's wooden club rested on top of his hands.

"Go inside the palace. It's not safe for you to stay in the open." Ashton instructed her through his gritted teeth, "Tell everyone who can't fight to do the same, could you do that much for me?"

The little girl nodded and rushed towards the palace.

"Good girl," Ashton mumbled before turning his attention towards the troll, "Don't you have any shame, going after little girls? You fucking pedo. Well, I guess it doesn't matter. I would've killed you regardless of what you did or did not do."

Ashton sidestepped, letting the club finally hit the ground before using it as a ramp to climb up to the Troll's head. The next moment, his claws pierced the troll's neck. Ashton then took a hold of the troll's backbone and yanked it out in one swift move.

The loud booming sound as the troll collapsed was enough to steal everyone's attention. As Alucard saw Ashton standing tall over the dead troll, he smiled. At that moment, he knew his daughters made the right choice.

Handling trolls so easily at such a young age was impressive, no matter how others saw it. Most of the vampire counts and countesses present there, had to team up to get rid of a single troll as they were one of the most tenacious monsters.

Killing them quickly was especially a challenge because of their regenerative abilities. But Ashton already seemed to know this and that's why went for their weakness and ripped the spinal cord out, instead of dealing damage bit by bit.

"Rather than wasting your time gawking at me, why don't you help evacuate the citizens instead?" Ashton shook his head, "Also, if you're deadset on fighting them, go for their eyes first, then knock them down by attacking their knees, before killing them for good."

Although most of them still did not agree with Alucard's decision of including Ashton in his cult, they could now see that the child wasn't a child when it came to fighting. In fact, he just might be weirdly stronger than quite a few of them.

The following moment, Ashton felt the ground shake and turned around. Only to see multiple trolls heading in his direction.

Ashton clicked his tongue and realised the troll would drag the fight unnecessarily long and by then the real monsters would start pouring out of the dungeon and turn their fight into an even bigger mess.

"I guess it's time for Baiter's weapons to make their international debut."

Saying so, Ashton pulled the one-shot hand cannon out of his inventory and aimed it at the trolls. Their gigantic bodies ensured that he wouldn't miss the mark. He fired the weapon and it blew a couple of trolls into pieces... leaving the vampires dumbstruck.

Chapter 206 Instance Dungeon (2)

"What was that sudden explosion?" Griffin asked Alucard who was equally shocked as he was.

They have seen numerous explosions during all the years they had lived for. But at best those explosions were able to distract the monsters and not harm them. It was the first time they had witnessed a type of modern weaponry that was able to annihilate monsters.

Ashton glanced at them briefly, taking in all of their reactions to analyse how were they reacting to his weapon. So far, all of them were surprised and intrigued. It was clear they wanted to know more about it, however, Ashton wasn't going to give them such an opportunity for free.

'Good, good, take in the feeling of domination. Give in to that feeling so that I can empty your pockets without trouble.' Ashton thought and turned towards Alucard, "Your highness, I'll be heading inside the portal and try to stop more of these freaks from coming out. Please join me when things calm down here a bit."

With that being said, Ashton rushed towards the portal. The path wasn't easy as it seemed, the explosion of the hand cannon had gathered the attention of the nearby trolls. All of them were rushing towards him, wanting to kill him before he could step a foot to the other side.

However, they fell right into Ashton's trap. He had no intention of fighting or killing the creatures just yet. Instead, he wanted to lure them inside the portal so that he could feast on at least one of them. After all, the healing factor they had looked too tasty for him to pass it up.

'Come on, get inside already...'

As soon as Ashton was inside the portal, he turned around immediately. A moment later one of the trolls showed up and swung his club at Ashton.

The troll had seen how Ashton took care of his kin, and thus swung the club a bit higher than necessary, thinking Ashton would jump up and try to rip his spinal cord just like before.

But to the troll's surprise, Ashton ducked below and kicked his kneecaps. The pain was immense as the troll fell to his knees. However, the pain soon subsided as the healing factor soon kicked in. But Ashton was quicker. Before the Troll could get back to its feet, Ashton had already dug his teeth in it.

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Vampire Skill: [Skill Absorption] activated. Attempting to absorb the passive skill [Low Heal] from the prey.

Required gene to learn the skill: Werewolf genes/ Vampire genes.

Required genes are present in the host's body. Proceeding with absorption.

Due to the efficiency of [Skill Absorption], the skill [Low Heal] has been upgraded to the skill [Regeneration].

Congratulations! You have created a new passive skill Lvl 5 [Regeneration]. You can view more information about the newly created skill.

Due to the creation of a new skill, the said skill has bonded itself to you. In other words, you're the only one who possesses this skill on this planet.

—

'Whoa, I never thought upgrading [Skill Absorption] would lead to the creation of new skills like this...'
Ashton was surprised by how absurdly powerful the upgraded skill was, 'I was wrong for bashing the skill after reading its description.'

Ashton didn't dilly-dally around the entrance for long, as more monsters were certain to come through. He would put his [Regeneration] skill to test later, but first, he needed to know what was the deal with this instance Dungeon.

While Ashton had been to many dungeons, it was his first time being inside something like this. Just by looking at it, he knew the cave he was in was full of mana.

He could feel the mana floating around him. He wanted to discover what was causing it, but the moment he took a step, the scenery changed immediately. He was no longer standing in a cave but in an open field.

"What the hell is going on here?"

He turned around and his back was still facing the 'Cave', but the scenery right in front of him was something entirely different, yet weirdly enough, they seemed to coexist. But then it clicked to him.

Maybe the dungeon was divided into two parts to keep certain entities separated. For example, the trolls were supposed to keep to the 'cave' which would explain why were they able to get out of the portal, even though it had just appeared.

While the 'field' part of the dungeon was supposed to keep the 'actual' dungeon monsters inside till it was time for the outbreak. In other words, there were two separate dungeons hidden inside a single one.

"Portal inside a portal? This shit is gonna drive me mad one of these days."

[You mean you're not mad already?]

"Lucifer?"

Ashton mumbled as soon as he heard a voice inside his head. Even though the voice seemed familiar to him, it clearly wasn't Lucifer's voice, despite him subconsciously mumbling his name.

[You wish... I'm much worse.]

"Astaroth?"

[... that bastard Lucifer already told you about me?]

"Pretty much. Also, get out of my body."

[You would like that, won't you? Sadly, I can't do that, If I could, you think I'll be sticking around a moronic bastard like you?]

"... why are you here talking to me all of a sudden?"

[Now that is a question worth answering. It seems my dear Lucy-boy made a huge mess and couldn't keep helping you out. So to put you and me off the radar, he gave up his admin privileges. Therefore, making me the 'admin'.]

"Great... just great." Ashton sighed and carried on walking deeper into the fields, "It feels weird to feel warm even though there's no sun inside this place. But forget about it, I have lots of questions I need to ask you."

[Does it look like I'm interested in a questionnaire?]

"Does it look like I give a shit about what you think?"

Ashton could hear Astaroth chuckle as soon as he said those words.

[I like you kid, so I'll let you ask three questions for now. Go ahead, shoot.]

Chapter 207 Instance Dungeon (3)

"What are you?" Ashton began with the most basic question, "I know you belong to a species called Xyran, but I don't even know that they are..."

[That's a tough question to answer. You may understand more when you see them yourselves, but for now, let's just say we are a species that has god-like powers. However, we are no gods, after all, we are mortal beings ourselves.]

Ashton took Astaroth's words with a grain of salt. Also, he couldn't use his [Heartbeat Sense] perk to check if he was lying or not because well, Astaroth did not have a heart and was just a voice in his head. As a result, Ashton had to believe what he was saying until he finds evidence that he isn't.

That being said, he now wanted to ask Astaroth the question that has been bugging him for a long time now. Something only he could answer.

"Back on the Island of Doom, I'm pretty sure I lost my eye while fighting those automatons and fell unconscious, was it you who helped me back then?"

[Yes, genius, that was me. I also completed the quest you were given. Did you like the rewards I chose for you? They'll come in handy later on so be sure to keep them with you. What's your last question?]

"How?" Ashton mumbled, "How are you inside me? No, let me rephrase that, how come you and I have the same body?"

[Now that's a question even I don't have an answer to... but if I had to guess, neither of us could have survived individually and thus we bonded together?]

Whatever Astaroth had just said made little to no sense to Ashton. Their survival was indirectly dependent on each other?

'I can smell the bullshit in his words. Dependent on him for survival? More like, he wants me to be dependent on him.'

[That being said, I'm pretty sure I died while entering your planet. How I am alive is as big of a mystery to me as it is to you.]

"I believe you, as much as I don't have a reason to," Ashton mumbled to make sure Astaroth didn't know what was going inside his head.

Since he had found his mother, all he needed to do was to ask her whether this alien motherfucker had told him was correct or not. That being said, he needed to 'clear' the dungeon he was in first.

But there was a slight problem... there were no monsters in his sight. Just an endless field with nothing but grass and a sun-less sky to see.

"Is this supposed to be like this?"

[Hm... nothing ever goes right on this fucking planet, does it?]

"What do you mean?"

[Dungeons like these shouldn't exist. At least based on the average level of the civilization inhabiting this place.]

Ashton ignored Astaroth's senseless ramblings and decided to investigate by himself. But he didn't remain alone for long, moments later, he could hear hasty footsteps rushing towards him.

To Ashton's surprise, more trolls were being spawned in the cave he had just exited. But rather than rushing out of the portal as they did before, they rushed towards him.

"Oh, you wanna fight me? Sure, come right- aye, where the heck are you going?"

The trolls ran past him, into the heavenly fields. Being ignored by a bunch of monsters was a first for Ashton. However, as much as he wanted to just up and kill them, he decided to wait it out.

He could get to know more about this dungeon through the help of the trolls.

[This fucking place is bugged.]

Astaroth eventually ended his ramblings with those words.

"Bugged? What do you mean?"

[I meant this dungeon has a lot of irregularities. At least, that should be the case if they haven't updated the rules and regulations.]

"... Maybe one of these days you'll say something that'll make sense."

[Maybe one of these days, you'll start using the brain cells holed up in your brain.]

As much as Ashton would have loved to bicker back and forth with the lovely resident of his head, he had things he needed to attend to. Namely, finding what those trolls were up to. But he was disappointed when he found the trolls humping each other next to what appeared to be a pond.

In the middle of the pond, some sort of a platform could be seen. Someone or something was residing on top of it... naked. Her silvery hair and strong naked physique could be the reason why those bloodthirsty trolls were humping each other like some bitch in heat, while the lady chuckled seeing them behave like that.

"They were running here to... ahem, do questionable things? What the hell is wrong with this place?"

[I already told you, this dungeon is filled with irregularities. You should find a way to clear the dungeon before it 'Overflows'. Who knows what kind of things this place would throw into that primitive world of yours.]

"Clear the dungeon. how? This is the first time I have been to a place like this and it turned out to be not working properly!"

[Lucifer didn't tell me you like to bitch about everything... what have I gotten myself into. You know what, just let me take over your body and I'll take care of everything just like the last time.]

"Yeah, you're going to have to try harder if you want a piece of me." Ashton scoffed, "Also, at least try to hide your real intentions if you're gonna be so obvious about it."

[Fine, let's see how long you can do this by yourself.]

Astaroth replied and then, his voice disappeared from Ashton's head. It seemed he had decided to sit this one out and not provide any help to Ashton.

"As if you're the one always saving my ass," Ashton mumbled and headed towards the pond to gather more information about what he needed to do, "What the hell?"

All of a sudden, multiple fish-like creatures jumped out of the water and ripped the trolls to shreds one after another before dragging the remains back inside the water. At the same time, more trolls spawned at the entrance to the cave and the cycle repeated itself over and over.

"These Xyrans have a creative imagination. Also, why the heck is no one else here yet?"

Back outside, the vampires had taken out all of the trolls with their united efforts. However, the moment the last troll fell, the entrance leading to the dungeon was blocked by a mysterious barrier.

The barrier was stopping anyone else from entering the dungeon, leaving Ashton to fend for himself inside.

Alucard and Griffin tried their best to find a way through the barrier, but there was nothing they could do. Neither physical nor magical attacks were even able to put a scratch on the barrier.

"Why isn't anything working?" Griffin expressed his frustration by punching the portal, only to get himself injured.

"Relax, Griffin. Your brawn isn't going to let us get through. We already tried that." Alucard mumbled while carefully analysing the portal, "Maybe having this barrier isn't so bad."

"What do you mean?" Griffin asked.

"It seems to be a two-way barrier. Meaning everything inside the dungeon would stay inside and everything outside would stay outside."

"So the monster won't be able to come out. Is that what you're saying?"

Alucard nodded, but then his expression got all serious. Having a barrier there was good and all, usually he wouldn't have wasted another minute of his life on it, but the problem was... Ashton.

He couldn't let anything happen to him. Not after his daughters had made up their minds to marry him. Also, the way the boy carried himself in a room filled with his 'predators' had left a mark on Alucard's mind.

he didn't know why but he had a feeling that the boy was destined for big things. Things, much bigger than the scope of their kingdoms and maybe even the entire world.

"I swore I'll never use it again, but if it has come to this then..." Alucard dipped his hands in his inventory and brought out a gigantic black sword.

"Alucard-" Griffin was shocked as the sword grew bigger and bigger, soon towering over the portal itself.

"I need to concentrate, Griffin... so don't... say a word."

Although Alucard's words silenced his mouth, they couldn't silence his curiosity. How could he not be curious about the relic Alucard was wielding. A weapon that was once Dracula's favourite.

A weapon that consumed innumerable souls to gain its name of... Aetherius, the sword said to hold enough power to split the heavens in one strike. It uses the blood of its wielder as well as the blood of the dead around itself to grow stronger.

That being said, the sword was believed to have been lost when Dracula disappeared. However, it seemed like that was all a lie made up to stop everyone from searching for it.

Chapter 208 Instance Dungeon (4)

"THIS IS BULLSHIT!" Ashton yelled at the top of his lungs while running away from a horde of naked Trolls that had... not so subtle intentions.

Just a minute ago, he was walking toward the mysterious pond, and now he was running away for his life and integrity. Before taking any action, Ashton wanted to take a closer look at what was going on with the trolls and the lady, but the moment he got too close, the trolls stopped humping themselves and charged toward him.

It seemed they did not like Ashton disturbing their 'hormone balancing' session and were now wanting to settle the scores. If Ashton wanted, he could have easily killed them all.

But that wasn't the issue... the main problem was the aftereffect of killing the trolls. As soon as he killed a troll, a single message popped up in front of him.

[Death heals the <Maiden of The Pond>. Total HP at 69%]

If Ashton had to guess, the Maiden was the lady sitting in the middle of the pond while the 'mermen' hunted down the trolls. That would also explain why the mermen were killing the trolls. But, a couple of things didn't make any sense...

Why were the mermen helping the maiden? Was she some kind of a godly entity to them, therefore they wanted to help her?

"Why the heck are you bastards so angry with me? I'm the one who saved you from death, you assholes!"

However, no matter how much he screamed, the trolls did not listen to a word he said. They were clearly under some kind of spell that made them respond to the will of the maiden and no one else.

"What should I do? The only way to get the trolls off my back would be to kill the maiden. But with these bastards on my back, it doesn't look like it'll be possible to even reach the maiden, let alone kill her." Ashton was lost in his thoughts.

In the meantime, Astaroth was staying true to his words. He had not offered a single piece of advice to help Ashton. This in a way could also be due to the fact that so far Astaroth could only gain control over Ashton's body when the latter was unconscious or grievously injured and wanted Ashton to get injured.

Thus in a way, it could be that Astaroth was hoping to reenact what happened back on the Island. But Ashton was dead set on not allowing that. mainly because having someone else control his body was weird.

"Should I put [Regeneration] to test?"

Ashton had gone through the details of his new skill while waiting for the second batch of trolls to get killed by the mermen. Apparently, the skill was actually strong enough to reconstruct broken bones and heal most of the injuries, just with a few moments worth of rest.

However, there was a drawback to the skill. After five minutes of using the skill, all of the user's stats would get halved for the following 12 hours.

Even if the debuff only affected the organic stats of the user and not the stats Ashton received through the items, losing his stats would not end up in a positive scenario. Especially since he didn't know what was in store for him next.

"I don't know what stats I'll need to face the mermen and the maiden, so I can't compromise my stats here. I could summon Sven and Celeste, they should be able to keep the trolls away while I deal with the Maiden. But first, I would need to seal the entrance to the field."

While Ashton was more or less sure that the vampires weren't coming to help him out, he couldn't take the risk and reveal his secret by accident. That's why sealing the entrance was the primary objective before summons his servants to his aide.

Also, by blocking the cave, Ashton would be able to prevent more Trolls from spawning. Which in turn wouldn't allow the Maiden to heal up any longer. His one move would kill two birds with one stone. The only problem was that he was out of hand cannons ammo or extra cannons to deal an explosive blow and cause the cave to 'cave in'.

Bolts shot from a crossbow weren't going to be able to do much either. He would have tried to destroy it with his hands, but by the time he would do that, the trolls behind him would catch up to him and might trigger [Regeneration] as it was a passive ability and Ashton had no control over it.

Leaving only one choice for Ashton.

"I sure hope this works, or I don't know what I'll do."

Saying so, Ashton summoned the power of winds by his side and threw a dozen gigantic [Wind Blades] towards the entryway of the cave. Although he hadn't mastered the control over the winds, he knew the strength of the blades depended on the amount of mana he poured into the blades.

"Yes!"

Although it took a bit more tries than he had anticipated, Ashton was able to block the cave temporarily. Once that was taken care of, he abruptly stopped, allowing the trolls to catch up to him.

The trolls were blinded by their lust and had lost all sense of reason. Thus they failed to see through Ashton's obvious plan. A moment later, Ashton's servants jumped out of his shadow and lunged at the enemies who dared to threaten their master.

"Be careful not to kill them!" Ashton instructed Sven as he was about to swing his sword.

Sven was about to take the troll's head off, but upon Ashton's order, turned his blade, slicing off the creature's arm. Meanwhile, the five vampire skeletons Ashton had, were busy attacking their legs, putting a stop to their horny march towards Ashton.

Celeste, on the other hand, couldn't feel more offended as half of the trolls gave up on chasing Ashton and decided they wanted to hump her instead. Given how appealing she looked even after death, it was a no-brainer the clubs between their legs responded to her more than to the master.

"Your brutality disgusts me!" She barked at the trolls before binding them using their own shadows, "This body shall only ever please the one who granted this form to me."

"... yeah, I know better than to stick my dick into crazy. Thanks for the offer though." Ashton sighed awkwardly as Celeste licked her lips for some reason, "Do that again and I'll rip that tongue off."

"Ooh... you make me want to do it more... ma-st-er."

"The hell is wrong with this dungeon? Why is everyone so sexually excited!?"

Sven shrugged his shoulders, while the trolls kept humping the ground even after their limbs were chopped.

"Forget it, the sooner I'll kill that maiden, the sooner this mess will come to an end. Celeste, keep them down till then, I'll leave the skillies to help you out. Sven, you're coming with me."

"As you wish..." Sven replied, placing his broadsword on his shoulder

[The Maiden had noticed the decline in healing.]

[The Mermen have been alerted!]

[New Quest: Stop the mermen living inside the Pond of Dissonance.]

As soon as the prompt popped up, hundreds of bluish creatures jumped out of the pond, draining it of its bluish tint. The lower half of their bodies looked like that of the fishes, but the moment they touched the ground, their fish-like bottom disappeared.

In their place, the mermen grew legs and began rushing toward Ashton and Sven. Their weapons n hand, ready to chop their enemies down.

"I have to stop them, huh? Sven, kill one of them will you? I want to confirm something first."

Sven nodded and stood in front of his master like an unbreachable wall. The moment a merman got within the range of his sword, he lost his head. But the outcome was something Ashton had predicted, but he wasn't happy that his hunch was correct.

[Death heals the <Maiden of The Pond>. Total HP at 69.32%]

"Fucking hell! Does killing anything end up healing her?" he sighed in annoyance before taking out the twin blades, "Sven, focus on the limbs, try not to kill them."

Sven acknowledged the new command and got to work. However, unlike the trolls who were huge and thus easy targets when it came to dismembering their limbs, these mermen were proving to be quite troublesome.

Their agility and unpredictable manoeuvres made it difficult for Ashton and Sven to make contact. Even when they managed to get them, the slippery scales covering their body made it even more difficult to slice their limbs off in one attack.

That being said, it almost felt like the mermen wanted to die and despite Ashton's and Sven's best efforts, sometimes they were getting successful in their suicidal mission. As only their limbs were covered with scales and not their torso.

[Death heals the <Maiden of The Pond>. Total HP at 72.32%]

"Damn it! How am I supposed to stop them without killing them?"

[Administrator has altered the existing quest into: Kill the <Maiden of The Pond>.]

"And here I thought you didn't want to help me out." Ashton smiled and promptly received another quest.

[Admin quest: While you're at it, kill yourself too.]

"..."

Chapter 209 Instance Dungeon (5)

However, despite getting the hint from Astaroth, it wasn't like the mermen would allow Ashton to casually walk up to the maiden. Not without dying first, at least. Sven was trying his best to clear the path in front of his master, but doing so without killing them was proving to be quite a herculean task.

Celeste would have been able to bind them using her Shadow Elementalist properties. But in order to do that, she would have to let go of the trolls first, which would have things a bit more difficult given the troll's regenerative abilities.

Despite being held hostage by Celeste's spell, the trolls were continuously regenerating their lost limbs, which the skeletons had to slice over and over to keep them down. As much as Ashton wanted to slice the maiden up using [Wind Blades], he couldn't do it.

The way the mermen were so eager to die by his hands, it went without saying that they would get in the way and end up dying by the blades instead.

That was the only reason why the fight had become troublesome for Ashton. Judging by the maiden's stat, Ashton could literally one-shot her, but for that, he needed to get close to her first.

"Damn it! Another wave of Mermen..."

Ashton had long since crossed the limits of annoyance. So much so, he wanted to kill the mermen and then take care of the maiden. Still, he managed to calm himself down and as he did, an idea found its way to him. If he only wanted to avoid them, he could have done so easily.

"Hehe... I can be such a dumb fool sometimes..."

[Only sometimes? Are you sure about that?]

"Maybe you are right. If a parasite like you invades someone's brain, it's obvious they'll turn retarded." Ashton retorted and once again summoned the power of winds to his aid.

He didn't know about it but having somewhat mastery over the winds gave him a lot of options to manipulate his surroundings. Although he couldn't use the wind as Camilla did to hover herself mid-air, he could still figure a way to do so. That is if he put his mind to doing it.

"Since simply pushing you fuckers won't work, I'll just push myself instead."

Saying so, he slammed his hands on the ground with all his might and was propelled into the air. He made it seem like it was his physical strength that pushed him upwards when actually, he had compressed the air around him making a small packet filled with air in each of his hands.

Thus, when he slammed his hands into the ground with all of his strength, the compressed bubble exploded, sending him flying towards the Maiden.

"I got you now!" he grinned, pulling out his claws, "Die now!"

The mermen immediately turned their attention towards the maiden. However, there was nothing they could do but watch in horror as her head was sliced away from the rest of her body. The maiden was no more. Ashton had won!

Or so he thought.

"Wait... why didn't I receive any exp after killing her?" Ashton turned around and to his horror... the maiden... was still alive and holding her head in her hands, "What the actual fuck is going on here?"

[I warned you this dungeon is irregular.]

"Irregular? My ass. This dungeon is busted. Wait a minute... oh my god... there's no way!"

Apart from that, Ashton saw one more thing... her face... she didn't have a face. No eyes, no mouth, no nose... nothing. Just the shape of the head. That's all she had for a 'head'.

He was confused. He killed her, and yet she was alive and well, sitting right in front of him. But terrifying things had just begun as a flesh sewn mouth soon opened up on the severed head. before anyone could comprehend anything, the bitch began shrieking loudly.

So much so, that even the undead summons were in 'pain'. Ashton fell to his knees, the sound was too unbearable for his ears. Covering them wasn't of any use either, as soon blood began pouring out of them soaking his clothes in his own blood.

However, he wasn't the only one affected by the shrieks. The mermen who were naturally sensitive to noises, couldn't hold out for much longer and died on the spot.

Even the trolls were no exception to that. None of them could start the sharp noise that ended up destroying their organs from the inside. And they literally puked their guts out before dying.

[Death heals the <Maiden of The Pond>. Total HP at 112.23%]

[The Maiden has successfully over-healed herself.]

[Requirements for the appearance of the secret dungeon boss have been made.]

[Phase two of the dungeon will begin now. Please wait patiently.]

Upon seeing their master in a vulnerable state, Celeste and Sven rushed in to protect him, while the skeletons charged toward the maiden. Celeste summoned a shadow barrier around Ashton to absorb the shrieking sounds made by the maiden, while Sven was on guard for potentially new enemies.

"Master are you alright?" Celeste inquired to which Ashton nodded.

"I'm fine. Thanks for the help." Ashton mumbled before wiping the blood off of his face, "But that bitch, she wouldn't be fine for long."

"Don't haste master. The woman is unpredictable and potentially immortal."

"Guess what? So am I."

Ashton was angry... very angry. It had been quite a while since someone had treated him like a punching bag. And he wasn't going to calm down till he fuck the bitch of a maiden over. After some struggle, he finally forced himself back to his feet as a notification appeared in front of his eyes.

[Maiden of the Pond has regained her true form and transformed into the Maiden of Afterlife.]

[The Secret boss has appeared on the field. Find a way to defeat this monster to clear the dungeon.]

[Failure to do so would result in a cataclysmic overflow, killing anything the maiden sets her eyes on.]

"Kill or be killed? About time this-"

Before Ashton could complete what he was saying, there was a loud explosion coming from the direction of the sealed cave. The king's cavalry had arrived.

Chapter 210 A Unique Gem

However, since Ashton had blocked the area linking the cave with fields, it would take them a while to reach him. Which was perfect as it gave Ashton an ample amount of time to deactivate his genes to avoid raising any suspicion.

"I'll see you guys later," Ashton mumbled before hastily cancelling [Valhalla] and reverting back to being a werewolf.

Just as his summons were absorbed back into his shadow, the rubble was thrown away and Alucard stood there along with Griffin and his elite warriors. The gruesome scene they saw in front of them, took their minds off of Ashton.

Griffin and the soldiers immediately jumped inside and began investigating the corpses of the fallen trolls and mermen. The grassy green fields have been turned red and blue with all the blood and gore spread all over the place.

"What in tarnation happened here?" Griffin mumbled softly, "Just what could have caused this mess?"

There was no answer to his question as none of them had entered the field before him.

"Forget about them, look for the kid first. We can't let him die due to our own failures." Alucard instructed them.

The soldier nodded and deeper inside. They did not have to look far for Ashton. He was right there, on his knees, drenched in his blood.

In front of him was someone that had the appearance of a human, yet all of them were sure she was no human. Not with the demonic wing protruding from her back.

Alucard followed them but was investigating some things on his own. Being a vampire well-versed in the art of dark magic, he could sense the traces of... something weird. It was as if someone had summoned a bunch of creatures that should not exist in their plane of existence.

In other words, someone there had been summoning the dead. At least that's what he could infer based on what he was seeing and sensing around the area.

That being said, he doubted anyone else could have the knowledge or the ability to summon the darkest creatures from the bowels of hell and manage to control them. Something even Lord Dracula is said to have difficulty in accomplishing.

'Hm... while I have seen some people utilising necromancy to raise skeleton soldiers, that's the extent of what a necromancer can pull off despite investing years and years of their life into mastering such a useless skill.' Alucard thought.

While in their golden age, merely having the knowledge of necromancy was considered to be the greatest treasure someone could stumble across. That being said, necromancers weren't known to spread their knowledge to others.

As they were afraid their importance and status would take a hit if more people were to master the art of necromancy. This was one of the biggest reasons why after the first wave of necromancers disappeared, so did their prestige.

The few who still practice necromancy were nothing less than a pitiful shadow of the ones who gave birth to Necromancy.

While Alucard took his sweet time to arrive there, Griffin and his soldiers surrounded the maiden. Despite that, the maiden seemed unaffected by them and had her attention focused on Ashton only. That being said, it didn't seem like she was going to attack him either.

"Are you alright Bismark?" Griffin asked Ashton while standing in front of him.

"More or less." Ashton replied, "What took you guys so much time?"

"There was a barrier- I'll explain it later. First, tell us about everything you know about this... headless creature."

"Sorry to disappoint you captain, but I'm just as clueless as you are." Ashton mumbled while slowly forcing himself back to his feet, "Being in this dungeon would make one lose his sanity. I sliced her head off, only for her to grab it like a lantern and start shrieking."

He continued, "She didn't stop. Not till I got to the condition that I am standing in now. She even killed those creatures that were trying to protect her. That's the only information I know of."

Griffin nodded and realised there was something weird going on in the dungeon. From the trolls running out of the dungeon to the barrier, everything felt a bit off. But at least they had an answer to why there were so many mangled corpses scattered all over the place.

However, there was one issue. How were they supposed to kill someone if she was still alive despite getting decapitated? Could they even do something against her?

"There's only one way to know. Everyone, listen up!" Griffin roared at the top of his lungs, "target that head the creature is holding. Snatch it away from her. Judging by how close she's keeping the head to herself, it's probably the only weakness she has."

Ashton nodded. He was thinking the same thing. If the head wasn't important to her, then there was no reason for the maiden to keep it so close to her. Although he didn't know what could he possibly do with the head, burning it should be a good start.

Griffin had not ordered Ashton to do anything, but Ashton wasn't someone who would allow someone else to take what he wants. However, before anyone could make a move, someone special finally decided to participate in the fight.

"Ah, so you might be the reason for all the dark aura I've been feeling ever since I entered this forsaken place." Alucard mumbled absent-mindedly when he saw the maiden, "Griffin, take everyone and retreat. I wouldn't forgive myself if I end up absorbing any of your souls."

"You're gonna use Aetherius again?" Griffin inquired.

"It would be a shame to let these many souls go waste, wouldn't it?" Alucard smiled as he walked up to Ashton, "You are a unique gem, Ashton Bismark. I don't often say this, but I am jealous that Jonathan found someone like you before I did. Now go, before these words fill up your head."

As soon as he said that, the black sword once again appeared over Alucard's head, absorbing the souls of all the creatures that had been killed inside the dungeon. But that was all Ashton could see as Griffin pulled him out of the dungeon as Alucard had ordered.