

## **Zompiewolf 221**

### Chapter 221 Bark (1)

Although it was a golden opportunity for Ashton to exact revenge on Mera. He decided it was best to take care of her for the last. Jonathan and Mera might not be on completely good terms, but as a father, he still cared for her.

It was for that very reason, he went as far as protecting her from the clutches of the Conundrum. Therefore, Ashton wasn't entirely sure how Jonathan would react to Ashton attacking her. Also, if he were to attack them, it was likely that the Morgans and Gruntas would go into hiding.

Making it a difficult and time-consuming task to look for them afterwards. That's why needed to plan every move of his before prematurely engaging in a battle. Although he did not doubt the ability of his soldiers, their numbers weren't large enough to fight all three of them simultaneously.

"For now, it is better to develop the city and establish some important connections before doing something impulsive," Ashton mumbled while laying in his bed.

The entire night, he was able to catch a glimmer of sleep. He was too caught up with planning and plotting to indulge in a mundane task like sleeping. Also, the vampire and undead genes within his body had changed him in a way that it was no longer a necessity for him to sleep.

However, sleeping did improve a few things within him such as providing him with a unique kind of freshness. That being said, Ashton was prepared to lose that 'fresh mind' for the sake of his revenge.

"Good thing no one is slacking off." Ashton yawned as he walked out of his tent.

Everyone was busy with the tasks assigned to them. Even the weak residents were helping the soldiers out. It wasn't something that Ashton desired, but if they wanted to help, who was he to stop them?

"ARGH!"

A sudden bloodcurdling scream tore through the air. Everyone immediately rushed towards the city gate, only to see about a thousand people were standing there and in front of them was a little kid who was the one screaming. The kid's hands were tied to the foot of a large direwolf, dragging him to the ground.

"Dominik NO!"

A woman rushed out of the crowd seeing her bloodied son being paraded around the entrance. But before she could do anything reckless, Renee pulled her back.

"Calm down for a second!" Renee tried her best to calm the woman but didn't have any success.

"Let me go!" The woman struggled in vain.

"Could you get her to calm down, please?" Ashton asked Verina without taking his attention away from the men standing in front of them.

Verina nodded and immediately rushed over to the lady, impairing her vision while at the same time, Irina blocked her hearing with their abilities.

They usually used this ability to impair the sensory organs of their opponents, giving them an edge over them. As much as Ashton was fascinated by their abilities, now wasn't the time to inquire about it.

"Who are you?" Ashton asked the one who appeared to be leading the men.

"The name's Peter Zolanski. Captain of the private military force of Baron Morgan." The crook-nosed blond man replied. His voice reeked of overconfidence and arrogance, things that a soldier should never have.

The moment the residents heard the name Morgan they immediately stepped back. It was evident that the bastard's cruelty had left a deep scar in all of their minds. No wonder they never stood up to Morgan when his name alone made them so afraid.

"May I know why are you here?"

"To let you know how things run in this city." Peter smirked, "Every month, my men will be here to collect taxes. It can be in the form of food, resources, labour or women, whatever we want you will have to give away or else perish like the fools who tried to object before."

His greedy eyes then fell on the ladies, especially on Renee, Fae and the vampire sisters as they were the only ones who didn't appear to be malnourished. Meaning, they were the perfect candidates to be turned into their playthings.

"Hm... since it's your first time here, I'll let you off easily. Just four girls, that's all I'll take from you this month. You can thank my generous nature later-"

"Oi, aren't you babbling off a bit too much?" Ashton's cold words immediately cut the bastard's squeaky voice.

Ashton continued, "I don't care who you serve. Right now, you're standing in my territory, which means you're at my mercy. So stop spouting shit and run back to your lord and tell him, if he wants to live a long and peaceful life, he better return the people he has kidnapped along with compensation for me."

For a moment Peter and the rest of his soldiers were stunned. But the next moment, they began laughing maniacally.

"Kid, you're a decade too young to be saying those words. You might even end up dead if you keep thinking you're a real baron." Peter said while wheezing for air between laughs, "Go and play somewhere else."

"Fine. If you want them, go get them." Ashton unexpectedly backed out of the argument.

"My lord what are you-" Sheera questioned Ashton, but the latter stopped her.

"Haha, that's more like it." Peter proudly walked up to Fae, there was something about her that made Peter's skin tingle with excitement, "I'll taste you first-"

He was a second away from grabbing Fae's chest when all of sudden something pulled him back as if an unknown force was pulling him away from his treasure.

"What the fuck do you think-"

Slap!

Ashton grabbed onto Peter's neck and lifted the grown-ass man off the ground with ease before slapping the shit out of him. With just a slap, half a dozen teeth fell out of the man's mouth.

"You will pay for this-"

Slap!

"Argh!"

Slap!

After being slapped till his face was swollen, Peter realised the moment a sound comes out of his mouth the kid would slap the shit out of him. Therefore he decided it was better to keep his mouth shut. But Ashton had other plans and kept slapping him till the moment Peter fell unconscious.

"Anyone else who wants to touch the ladies? Feel free to try. But if you fail," Ashton threw Peter back towards his battalion of soldiers, "be prepared to be thoroughly humiliated."

## Chapter 222 Bark (2)

Ashton honestly believed after witnessing their leader getting shit on, the rest of them would simply back down. But much to his surprise and annoyance, the soldiers took their weapons out and were about to charge right inside.

"This does not look good," Ashton stared at the civilians around them.

His five hundred soldiers were nowhere near enough to stop a thousand men charging at them. If they clashed, there were bound to be casualties and Ashton didn't want that.

Blood was the last thing he wanted to see on his first day since he took command of the city. But if his enemies were so desperate to die, then it was only right to fulfil their wishes.

"There can only be three reasons for their idiotic charge." Ashton mumbled, "Either they don't know who I am, or this man and his honour are more important than their lives or they know about me and don't give a fuck. Tsk, there's no time for ramblings. I'll have to take a gamble."

Ashton began shouting orders at everyone to prepare for battle. However, the sudden sound of an explosion distracted him.

"Bull's eye!" Baiter happily exclaimed, punching the air while he was at it.

Ashton was a bit confused but then realised what happened. One of the morons might have stepped on a trap laid by Baiter.

Although the walls and the building surrounding the city might take a while to be rebuilt, Baiter had taken the pleasure of spreading some ready to use traps all around the city, that could be triggered by him at will. Just one of the few overpowered skills related to the creationist class.

'Tsk, if only I could get that class too...' Ashton thought but soon shook those thoughts out of his head, "Great job, Baiter! Keep disrupting them from a distance and be careful not to pop any of us up with those explosions."

Ashton applauded the little weirdo before taking arms himself, "Renee, Fae, focus on taking the people out of here. Virgil, you're with me. Sheera, the knights are yours to command."

All of them nodded, acknowledging his commands and got to work.

Following the explosion, the united forces were now in utter chaos. They had not expected their enemies would have established such tiny yet dangerous defences.

Although the explosion wasn't powerful enough to kill them in an instant, it was enough to leave them in ruins and covered in their blood.

If Baiter wanted, he could have increased the explosive output while setting them up. But ultimately decided against it as such a powerful explosion would do more harm than good to them. After all, ruining the city to take out a bunch of enemies wasn't worth it.

Ashton rushed in slicing enemies left and right. Their numbers might have been too much for him and his soldiers to handle. But that rule only applied till the enemies were organised and focused on them. But after Baiter's stunt, it was easy to handle them... momentarily.

"Don't kill them all. I have a plan for them."

Ashton reminded his soldiers. But as time passed, it became increasingly difficult to do so as the soldiers were continuously gathering their willpower and fighting back. It was inevitable to avoid killing them entirely.

"What the hell are they doing?"

However, to everyone's surprise. Some of the soldiers soon began surrendering themselves. None of them had asked them to do so, but they did it of their own volition. Ashton's soldiers weren't aware that it was just another one of their tactics.

By making uninfluential soldiers surrender, the rest of them were already on their way to escape along with Peter. But that wasn't all, with the people surrendering all around them, a part of Ashton's force had to be dedicated to properly detaining them.



This also gave Peter's soldiers time to regroup. By merely sacrificing 300 from their thousand men strong army, they were able to reduce their enemy's fighting efficiency by 50%. It was a strategy Ashton had never even heard of.

"Tsk... that damned Mera better pay us well for doing this shit!" Peter mumbled through his swollen face, "I have to report all of this to lord Morgan."

He wanted to say a lot of things, but the treatment Ashton had given him mere moments ago was still fresh in his mind. He had underestimated the kid... a grave mistake to say the least.

His benefactor, Lord Morgan along with Mistress Mera, thought they would be able to force the brat into submission by utilising his inexperience and keep doing what they had been doing till now.

But to their dismay, the kid might be inexperienced in terms of governance, but he wasn't callow when it came to fighting. The injuries on his face were the proof of that.

"Go faster bastard, if he catches me, you're dead!"

Just as those words escaped Peter's mouth, an arrow whizzed past his head, but his driver wasn't so lucky.

"What is this!?"

Without the driver, a crash was inevitable. A couple of seconds later, Peter managed to drag himself out of the wreckage, only to be greeted by an unnerving sight. All of the soldiers that were trying to escape along with him, were nowhere to be found.

"What..."

"Sacrificing your soldiers was a wise move. If only your soldiers knew a thing or two about acting, you might have managed to escape."

"Eek!" Peter jumped up as soon as he heard Ashton's voice and immediately covered his face, in fear of being slapped again.

"Hm... since your soldiers surrendered, it would be wrong of me to send them back," Ashton mumbled while turning Peter's attention towards his soldiers, "You, on the other hand, didn't surrender. Good for you."

"Eh?" Peter was genuinely confused by Ashton's sudden mood swing. Just a moment ago the kid was so hostile toward him and now he was smiling at his face?

"I'll let you off this time. But only if you do something for me."

"W-What will have to do?" Peter asked politely, trying not to offend the kid.

"Nothing much, just bark."

"W-What?"

"You ask one more stupid question and I'll rip your skin off the bones. Understood?"

Whatever semblance of pride that was left in Peter's heart kicked in. It was clear as day what the kid was doing with him. He wanted to thoroughly humiliate him, just like when he slapped him senseless. But this time he wasn't going to bring any more harm to his lord's name.

"I refuse- ARGH!"

As soon as Peter refused to comply, Ashton lodged an arrow straight into his knee, forcing the man to cry in pain while he fell on his back.

"I said, bark!"

Chapter 223 Declaration Of War

"Is everyone okay?"

"Yeah, everyone's fine. We lost a couple of soldiers, apart from that no one's life is in danger." Sheera replied, "But what do we do about these extras?"

Sheera, being a royal knight and a soldier, knew her enemy was merely following the orders of their lord. Just like they were following Ashton's orders. In her eyes, the soldiers were misguided by incompetent leadership and thus she was treating them with a sliver of honour.

Ashton, on the other hand, knew them better than that. Obviously, it was thanks to his [Detection] skill, he knew exactly how full of shit every single one of them was and wanted to treat them as such.

"What do you mean? what about them?" Although Ashton knew exactly what Sheera meant, he wanted her to voice the words and not imply something and leave the rest to Ashton.

"They surrendered so according to the rules of the knightly order, they are prisoners of war. Therefore, we have to feed them and provide housing for them. Whether it be a prison cell or a tent, or any other place."

"And you think these assholes deserve it? You might have forgotten, but I vividly remember their lustful eyes as they stared at the women of the city. Even though they weren't looking at me, I felt disgusted beyond any limit and you want me to give them food?"

"But my lord-"

"Sheera, I respect you. I really do, but I'm not compassionate enough to do what you're asking of me." Ashton turned around to walk away, "But I will make an exception. I will let them help rebuild what they destroyed."

He continued, "If they work, they get food and water, if they don't... well then I'll force them to work either way. Minus the food and water, of course. Relay this to them, also, only those who agree to work will get medical attention as well. That's all."

"As you wish, my lord."

Sheera replied and walked away to execute his orders. Her facial expression was the same as before, however, Ashton could feel a sense of disappointment in her voice. He simply shrugged his shoulders and went inside his tent where an unsightly guest was waiting for him. She will have to deal with her emotions herself.

After capturing Peter, Ashton had spent three hours turning him into an obedient pet. After having his fingers thoroughly broken beyond repair and both of his hands shoved up his ass one after another, there wasn't anything Peter wouldn't have done to get in Ashton's good graces. Even if it meant betraying his lord.

Torturing him wasn't something Ashton enjoyed doing, but Peter's screams must have brought a semblance of peace to the residents who have been suffering through the years. For now, that was enough... at least until Ashton enacted the second phase of his plan.

"Ready to talk?"

"Woof! Woof!" Peter enthusiastically replied.

"I shouldn't have gone overboard..." Ashton scratched the back of his head, "You have my permission to talk normally."

"Thank you, my Lord! Thank you!"

"You seem to know who I am, then why did you still attack me? Do you not fear the wrath of king Jonathan?"

Ashton jumped straight to the point. It had been bugging him a lot why these fuckers attacked him even though they knew who he was. Even if they didn't, they should have recognised the royal knights around him, that should have been enough to make them realise what they were about to do.

"Mistress Mera had assured lord Morgan that the king would not interfere in the matter at all." Peter replied while huffing like a dog, "All I know is she had to give Lord Morgan some kind of proof before he was convinced with her plan."

"What proof?"

"T-That I d-do not know, my lord. I swear on my life!"

Ashton simply nodded. He knew Peter wasn't lying because his [Heartbeat Sense] didn't go off. Which it would have if he had been lying, just like he had been doing initially. However, he wanted to know what kind of proof could Mera possibly have with her to pull off something like this?

Also, why wouldn't Jonathan do anything? Ashton knew Mera and Jonathan were closer to each other than they had been before, but regardless of that, Jonathan would still need him to ask Alucard for help in dealing with the swamps.

'Maybe it was a wise decision to get close to Alucard. I cannot trust Jonathan to have my back anymore.'

He kept thinking about it, but not a single answer came to his mind. And then it hit him like a truck. No matter how close Ashton was to Jonathan, at the end of the day, he was but a weapon to him. Something he could discard either after its purpose was filled or he got his hands on a better weapon.

'Hm... shooting arrows in the dark wouldn't do me much good. For let's keep an eye on the matter and focus on evolving. Once I hit level 30 on all genes, I should be strong enough to take anyone in Lycania in a fight.'

"W-Would you like to know anything else, M-My Lordship?" Peter asked nervously.

"No. But I do have a task for you."

"A-Anything for you, sir! Just say the word."

"Return to your lord and tell him, I have taken his men hostage. If he wants them back, then I am willing for an exchange." Ashton instructed Peter, "All of the people whom he has taken from the village along with proper compensation for the destruction he and his soldiers have caused. Give me those two things and you'll have your soldiers back."

"Sure, my lord. I will convey your message word by word to him! B-But... sir, lord Morgan can be stubborn sometimes... What should I do if he refuses?"

"Then tell him to prepare a thousand graves for them and a few more for his family," Ashton replied as if he didn't know the kind of weight his words held.

It was basically a declaration of war. There were only two options, either do what he said or be prepared to die. Ashton had let these fucking nobles do as they please for far too long. But now that he had the power to kick their asses, he wasn't going to back down. Not by a longshot.

#### Chapter 224 True Potential (1)

"We must have underestimated him..."

An old man in his late 90s was sitting all alone in the large chamber. Judging by the housing capacity of the room, it would appear the man was used to having a large audience present at all times, but this time, he was all alone.

"Enough's enough. I have to put a stop to my son's madness before he destroys us all."

All of his hairs had turned grey first fighting humans and now suppressing rebels. However, this time the rebels were leftover humans, but werewolves themselves. The days of the iron rule were disappearing faster than ever before.



As days turned into weeks and weeks into months, the youngsters were becoming stronger and stronger. With it, their ambitions. Right now, the man was worried about the progress of one such youngster.

Someone so ferocious, even the Vampire Overlord Alucard and King Jonathan found it wise to form a close relationship with him. But he deemed the kid too erratic and mysterious to be trusted. However, making a move against him could potentially lead him to death's doorstep.

But he was foolishly convinced to help the ones wanting the kid dead. One of whom was his own son, the leader of the Morgan household. In his blind love for his son, he, the great Bishop Morgan, supported his son's decision to attack the new baron.

In hindsight, the kid might not be against them at all, and whatever his son had been telling him could be false information fed to him by someone who wanted them to fight to the end.

"I should have done a better job raising my son..." Bishop shook his head, and in his hands was a letter addressed to him by king Jonathan himself.

The letter... all it contained was bad news. Mera had 'assured' his son, that the king wouldn't make a move on them. This reassurance along with their close relationship with Jonathan was enough to not scare them regarding the backlash they might have to suffer for screwing over the King's chosen.

But they couldn't have been more wrong. Even though the king himself didn't do anything to them, their family name was about to be forever ruined. All because of his son's illegal activities and insatiable greed.

The only reason Jonathan wasn't sending the army to their doorstep was because of their old friendship. During the Human-Mutant war, they had fought alongside each other for years and had formed a somewhat brotherly bond.

That was also one of the prominent reasons why the Morgan name was as prestigious as it was along with being one of the oldest baron families. Thousands of people wanted to get close to them, with hundreds among them going as far as readily sacrificing their lives to protect their honour.

But that sacred honour was about to get tarnished, all because of some slaves and a handful of Effium.

In the letter, Jonathan had 'ordered' them to apologise to Baron Ashton along with handing him all of the riches that the Morgans had taken from the treasury to 'repair' the city now known as Livan.

But their punishment didn't stop there. They were further ordered to serve under Ashton for the rest of their lives as atonement for their sins of betraying the king.

In the eyes of the King, this could have been the most generous punishment he could have given them. But in the eyes of the commoners, the Morgans, who had never done anything to harm their name and the respect of the people, the downfall in their status would be unrecoverable.

Not only would have to acknowledge all the wrong things they have committed, but they would also lose face in front of the people. Years of blood and sweat that Bishop had sacrificed would mean nothing.

As much as he wanted to blame his son for the mishappenings, Bishop knew he too was just as much responsible as him. He knew what his son was doing was wrong on every possible level. However, out of his love for his only child, he didn't say nor do anything to stop him.

Bishop even went as far as covering up for his son so that Jonathan wouldn't find out that he was being conned by someone whom he loved like his nephew. Their betrayal was the reason why Jonathan was ordering them to make it right and hand over everything to its rightful owner.

Little did he know, Marcee, Bishop's son had done something entirely unforgivable by sending a tenth of his troops to get the boy killed. If Jonathan got to know about it, even the grim reaper wouldn't have been able to stall their deaths for long.

"I can not decide whether not hearing back from Peter is a blessing or a curse." Bishop got off his extravagant chair and walked up to the window, all while scratching his bushy beard, "It is clear that he failed his task, which means the boy is still alive. Thus Jonathan might be willing to forgive Marcee, just this once if we give up everything to the kid. But I fear retaliation from the boy."

At that moment, Bishop was interrupted by the appearance of Marcee who was once again... drunk. Drinking in broad daylight had become a daily routine for him. After all, there was no one who could stop him from doing so.

"You... called for me, f-father?" Marcee barely managed to speak as his legs gave out a moment later.

"For the sake of your deceased mother, can you not drink for a day?" Bishop couldn't have been more disgusted at that moment and wasted no time in showing it to his son by slapping him hard across the face.

Marcee got back to his feet but didn't say a word. An action that only added fuel to fire.

"It is a result of your drunken escapades we're about to suffer the wrath of king Johathan! I told you not to associate with that witch of a woman Mera, but you did and now we're living on top of a pile of crap while she is happily preparing to fuck someone else over!"

"What are you so mad about, old man?" Marcee asked as if the slap had not even hit him, "Please refrain from involving yourself in the family affairs anymore and live the rest of your days locked in your room. You are going senile and staying silent is the best option for you."

"You brat! I shouldn't have spoiled you with my love... but I couldn't bring myself to do it, not after your mother died while giving birth to you." Bishop sighed, clearly disappointed with his son, "But all of that stops now. From this moment onwards, you are no longer the head of this household!"

"Eh, and who is going to stop me? You?" Marcee asked with a sly expression, "You think you can do so, f-a-t-h-e-r?"

Bishop had had enough, he once again raised his hand to slap his brat of a son, but something wrapped itself around his arm, pulling him backwards.

"A whip?" Bishop turned around in surprise, only to be greeted by Mera's evil face.

"Oh my, were you trying to harm my pet?" She smiled before pulling her whip.

"Your pet?"

"Of course. Did you think Mr Goodie Two-shoes would have gone against his daddy's wishes otherwise? Show it to him, love."

As soon as Mera's words fell upon his ears, Marcee ripped his shirt off. A slave crest was engraved on his chest, and seemingly Mera was the one it was connected to.

"A slave crest, but how?"

Bishop was dumbfounded, and he wouldn't have been alone to be shocked after witnessing something like that. Anyone who would have seen a slave crest on a werewolf would have been shocked just as much. After all, a slave crest that worked on their species shouldn't exist in the first place.

It was something strictly associated with Humans, and there had been no records of anyone making a slave crest for werewolves.

But Bishop was sure of it, his son was under the influence of the crest. That was the only possible reason why his obedient son began refusing his father's instructions all of a sudden.

It also meant, that whatever that Marcee had been doing till now, was because Mera wished it to happen. Not because his son wanted to bring harm to his family's name.

"You... bitch! I will kill you!"

Bishop transformed into a werewolf and lunged at Mera, however, before he could do anything to her, Marcee rushed in between them, throwing his father off. Bishop growled at his son, but no matter what he did, Marcee didn't move.

"Oh... a fight between a father and his son. Now that's something I would kill someone to watch." Mera smiled before keeping her whip away, "Thanks to your generosity, I wouldn't need to kill someone because you will do it for me. Break him Marcee, but don't kill him. I'm in need of another puppet."

"As you wish, Mistress," Marcee mumbled and transformed into a werewolf as well.

## Chapter 225 True Potential (2)

Declaring war and following through with it are two different things. While Ashton was hell-bent on fighting the Morgans and making them pay for whatever they had done to countless people, he did not have enough soldiers to face off against more than ten thousand soldiers that the Morgans had under their command.

That was only taking into consideration their own forces. Nevertheless, they were also going to call in favours from other barons which could increase the strength of their forces by up to forty to fifty thousand soldiers.

But that was only a part of his problems. He would need more rations, weapons, armours everything that an army would need to fight for an uncertain amount of time. However, he didn't have any of it.

Whatever little food he had, already had the names of the citizens written on it, and despite how much he needed the food for his soldiers, he couldn't bring himself to do it. Honestly, he felt annoyed that the werewolves he had sworn to kill, were now being viewed as... people by him.

"I can't even ask Jonathan for help, considering what Peter informed me regarding the 'proof'. he is more likely to stay neutral because of Mera. Which sucks big time." Ashton sighed in defeat, "At least the soldiers are readily helping around the city so it took some of the burdens off the shoulders of my warriors."

Although the soldiers he had enslaved were a bit hesitant to help the 'enemy' at first, once they realised Ashton was going to treat them just like he was treating the rest of his people, most of them readily decided to help him out. Thanks to that, Livan was slowly but surely making its way back to its former glory.

However, it wasn't all sunshine there. While the people of Livan were happy about their current situation, none of them wanted a war to break out at their doorstep. They had suffered too much already, but if their lord wanted them to fight, they'll do so without any questions.

But they weren't the only ones who didn't want a war. Sheera had been surprisingly vocal about Ashton's decision and with her were the rest of the soldiers. After all, in their eyes, Ashton was still a child who had a lot to learn in front of him. As a result, they respected Sheera's opinions more than his.

The only ones who had been in his complete support were Irina, Verina, Virgil and the rest of his squad. They were the only ones who knew about his strength and capabilities first-hand and trusted him with their lives, as most of them were in one way or another indebted to him. While in the sister's case, he was someone important to them.

Irina and Verina even offered their troops to fight alongside him and they were sure Alucard wouldn't refuse either. However, Ashton had to decline their generous offer.

Even if Alucard himself was to come there, he would have to come through Deja and if Jonathan was compromised, then it was unlikely he would allow a passage to them.

That being said, seven of them would not have been able to win a war by themselves. Thus Ashton decided to send Peter off with a different set of instructions. Rather than sending an open threat to the Morgans, Ashton decided to extend an olive branch toward them.

In exchange for their soldiers, Ashton wanted money. He couldn't directly ask them for resources as it would let them know that he was not prepared for an all-out war and hence they would have a crucial edge over him. It was something Ashton couldn't afford them to have thus he took the peaceful route.

It was only a temporary arrangement while he gathered resources and established his territory. Ashton's main goal was to establish a workshop along with Baiter using the money he would get from Morgans.

Once that was accomplished he could slowly establish Livan as a commerce centre with Baiter's weapons and pieces of equipment being the centre of attraction.

Ashton had already garnered the attention of both werewolves and vampires with baiter's weapons. Now all he had to do was to claim the potential customers and he wouldn't have to worry about getting the resources he required in order to take on Morgans, Gruntas and Mera.

But it was a long term goal and for now, he needed something to keep those bastards away from him and his city.



[Aren't you forgetting something?]

"What? Do I have a quest or something?"

[No, but you're forgetting about something crucial. You do have an army.]

"I doubt Sven and Celeste can be counted as an army..."

[Hm... maybe I should check whether those intelligence points are working or not.]

"... what do you want anyways?"

[I want you to help realise your true potential! That way, you'll be stronger and I wouldn't have to worry about dying because of a certified moron.]

Ashton decided it was best to listen to what this bastard had to say. Despite having their differences, Ashton knew he could trust him more than anyone else. Having their lifelines linked wasn't the worst thing that could happen to him.

"Maybe it would be better if you spoon-feed me the answer for once rather than play 'riddle me this'."

[Honestly... if I had arms, I would have smacked some sense in you. How did you forget about Wraith Wolves?]

"What about them?"

[Honestly, do you even read things written within your status plate? You should do it one of these days, it's really helpful and it saves me from wanting to die.]

Ashton did what Astaroth asked of him. He opened the tab but couldn't see anything different. All he could see was the information about his stats, skills, and titles.

"Hm... I can't see anything different."

[Click on the titles and you'll know.]

"Wait, what is this?"

[The permit of your authority over Wraith Wolves dungeon and Eastern Palace dumbass!]

Chapter 226 True Potential (3)

A couple of days later...

Peter finally arrived at Zinon, the territory owned by the Morgans, not knowing what to expect. On one hand, he did what he needed to in order to save his life by acknowledging Ashton as his lord.

But on the other hand, not only did he betray his lord, but he was back acting as a messenger of their enemy. There could be only one punishment for doing such a thing- Death.

Well, that would have been the case if he could even reach his lords in the first place. As soon as he stepped foot inside the city, the soldiers and his comrades jumped him as if he was some lowly thug and restrained him before he could even get a word in.

"What is this? Unhand me this instant!"

Those were his last words before a piece of cloth was forced into his mouth and he was dragged away. All of this happened on a street filled with people who knew Peter and yet did not raise a finger to help them.

And why would they? Peter was a well-known menace. There wasn't a single soul whom he hadn't taken advantage of in one way or the other by abusing his powers. Therefore, seeing him getting treated like the criminal he was, only brought pleasure to their eyes.

An hour later, Peter was thrown into the throne room, still restrained as if he was some rabid dog. However, the room was entirely empty, with the exception of Lord Bishop and Lord Marcee. But as he looked closer, there was someone else standing behind them.

A woman's silhouette was slowly creeping behind the lords, with a dagger ready in her both of her hands.

"Hmph! Hmph! Hmph!"

Peter tried his best to make the lords turn around and save themselves. However, his efforts were in vain. The lady got closer and closer to Marcee, who for some reason still hadn't noticed the woman standing right behind him.

It only seemed a matter of a moment before the lady attacked Marcee with her knife. However, the next moment something unpredictable happened. Something that forced Peter into a state of shock. The lady smacked his lord so hard, that he fell off of his throne.

A moment later, the lady's face was graced by the low lighting of the room as she took Marcee's place.

"How many times do I need to tell you, dogs like you are not allowed to sit like Lycans." Mera spat on Marcee's face in disgust, "You stay down near my feet like a good slave. Am I wrong... what was your name?"

"It's Peter," Bishop replied, and the next moment Mera lunged the knife deep into his thigh, but the man didn't even flinch.

"Did I ask you the question?" Mera snarled at him, "You only bark when you are asked to! Now, where were we? Oh my, how will you talk when you're restrained. Guards, take the cloth out of his mouth!"

"Ha... what have you done to them!?" Peter yelled at the top of her lungs as soon as he could do so.

Mera didn't respond to him, but Marcee did by throwing a dagger at him. For a drunkard, his aim was pretty good as he managed to hit the man directly in his shoulder.

"What I did to them? Hm... something much worse than what I am about to do to you. But first, I want to hear why you are back alone."

Peter bit his lips to stop thinking about the pain. The pain he was suffering now, shouldn't have been anything in comparison to the pain he felt from Ashton's hands and yet he was hurting too much.

"I asked you something."

"Haha... why am I here? Hm... to beg you not to mess with Lord Ashton! Not if you want to end up six feet under the ground."

The pain was slowly getting unbearable. Peter didn't realize it yet, but he was slowly losing his mind. That was the reason behind his maniacal laughter. However, Mera did not seem to find his words funny.

"Oh, I never thought you bastards were so quick to switch allegiance. But it doesn't matter what you think. That kid has gone way out of his limits and needs to be taught a lesson. And we'll do so regardless of what that bastard thinks he can do."

"You think so?" Peter was still laughing like before, "I don't know what kind of person you think Ashton is, but he is much better than these fucking spineless bitches who wouldn't stand to defend their subject who has been nothing but loyal to them!"

Peter had officially lost it. After all the years he had served the Morgan family, they would not even raise a finger to stop an outsider from treating him like this?

He had no doubt in his mind that Ashton was a much better ruler than they ever could be. At least he was willing to do anything to save his people no matter what lengths he had to go to. So much so, he even decided to not wage war on his enemies, just because it could lead to the death of his subjects.

The Morgans... they weren't anything like Ashton and Peter had failed to see it before.

"You talk too much." In a flash, Mera got off her seat and reappeared in front of Peter who was on his knees, "Let's correct that, shall we?"

"What are you- ARGH!"

Mera forced her hands into Peter's mouth and ripped his tongue out in one swift motion. It was her turn to laugh maniacally while Peter desperately struggled to attack Mera.

"Laugh now bastard! HAHA!" She mocked him before turning toward Marcee, "Rip him to pieces and announce that Ashton had sent him over like this. Make sure that's the narrative everyone knows of, do that much and I might let you lick my feet someday."

As soon as Marcee heard her words, he yanked the knife out of his father's thigh and lunged at Peter. The latter desperately tried to run away from Marcee, but his restraints didn't allow him to get far.

A moment later, the corridors were filled with his cries of pain as Marcee ripped him apart. Piece by piece.

"Ashton isn't foolish enough to wage a war from his end, not without preparing for it first. But with this, we have a reason to attack him... haha!"

## Chapter 227 Levelling Fiesta (1)

It was nearly midnight, the sky was filled with colours ranging from black to navy blue as the beautiful moon graced the planet with its presence. The sky, clearer than ever before made it possible to count the countless craters on its surface.

Under the beautiful light, a boy stood alone. Even the beauty of nature couldn't calm the storm raging in his head. For it was a storm that could end up swallowing everyone and everything in his sights.

Even the peace that came with the night sky wasn't enough to cover the looming shadow of the war. For a war was to come, whether they liked it or not.

While lost in his thoughts, Ashton could feel something wasn't right. According to the instructions he had given Peter, he should have already informed him whether the Morgan's accepted his proposal or not. However, it had been quite some time and Ashton hadn't heard shit from him.

As far as he knew there could have possibly been only two reasons why Peter didn't contact him afterwards. Either he had betrayed him and changed sides once again or he could have been killed.

"After the things I did to him, it's unlikely that fucker would have had the guts to betray me," Ashton mumbled as he observed everyone working there, "However, I have no idea how the Morgans treat the people who turned their backs on them. It is possible Peter was killed before he even got to say a word."

Nevertheless, it didn't matter whether Peter was successful in his mission or not. For Ashton had an ace up his sleeve to take care of anyone who dared to unnecessarily provoke him. Although it was only a half baked plan, it was better than having no strategy at all.

He had the ability to call forth Wraith Wolves to his aide using his authority over the dungeon they occupied. But the ability was only half-developed as it required his genes to be at level 30.

If he was to summon them now, he would lose his control over them as soon as they stepped out of the dungeon. Which would mean they'll do more harm than good to him.

However, that wasn't the only downside either. If he was to follow the plan, there was a high chance his identity would get exposed as all of his genes would require him to be active for a moment while he summoned the wolves.



Also, considering that he needed to get to level 30 as soon as possible, taking precautions would only slow him down. It was something he couldn't have done as long as people were around him.

He needed to eat a lot of flesh and drink a lot of blood if he wanted to get to level 30 for all his genes before the impending war breaks out. If he failed to do so, then there was no chance he would win against Mera and the rest of the nobility without someone's help. Someone like Jonathan or Alucard.

But there was a problem. He couldn't simply up and leave to kill monsters or... people, for that matter. It would look as if he angered the Morgans and then ran away by himself, leaving his residents to fend for themselves. Not only would it make him look bad, but it would also make the others think less of him.

One could say that he was the glue holding Livan together and if he left for a long time, all hell might break loose. Nonetheless, just like the saying went, when one door closes, another one opens up, Ashton too had one door that he could use.

"Leaving already?" Virgil asked Ashton, "In the dead of the night, the night creatures you might encounter would be stronger than they have ever been. Not to mention, the-"

"I know, Virgil. That's the reason why I am leaving tonight. The creatures you saw in those mines are the ones who would save us when the war breaks out." Ashton replied softly, "Has everything been prepared?"

"You think?" Virgil smirked before offering a cigarette to his lord, but he declined, "You sure you want to go alone? Sheera and the soldiers are enough to take care of things here. I can accompany you. If it comes to worse, you can use me as a meat shield!"

"I'd rather not. I don't want Fae to chop my hands or worse, cast a curse on me."

At the mention of Fae, Virgil began coughing vigorously. It seemed Ashton had touched a subject Virgil wasn't expecting him to.

"Dude... how did you-"

"You're really going to ask me that?" Ashton smiled before patting Virgil's back, "It's clear as day something is going on between the two of you. You can mask your emotions very well, but she, well let's just say she's as terrible at acting as I am in making intelligent decisions."

"Huh, I guess we got busted. We wanted to wait till everything stabilised before announcing our decision to get married. Tsk, if anyone else was to find out-"

"Wait, you think only I know about it?"

"... oh god. Everyone knows about it already?"

Ashton nodded while smiling seeing the man panic like a five-year-old who couldn't find his mother in a crowded place.

"Don't worry. Once the war is over, I'm sure everyone would be overjoyed to have an occasion to celebrate. Also, while I'm gone, tell Baiter to finish that underground bunker we are building. It's crucial to have it developed as soon as possible."

"Will do."

With everything set and done, it was time for him to disappear for a couple of days. The people there have been already fed a lie that Ashton was going back to the capital to get more resources and help. Since they were running out of food, no one batted an eye at Ashton's sudden disappearance.

'To be honest, that's not even a lie. I am leaving the city to get food for myself and as for help, if everything goes according to plan I should be enough.'

Chapter 228 Levelling Fiesta (2)

"Bulls give us beef right? Whatever it is, looks tasty. Though... should I eat it raw?"

[Sure go ahead. You have high enough poison resistance to not die. Dunno about paralysis though. But hey, if you eat it now it would be a learning experience!]

"Yeah, on second thought, I'll roast them first."

It had been a day since Ashton entered the catacombs that were once Effium mines. Honestly, he was expecting to fight rodent-like creatures considering they love to live in places like these, but to his surprise, instead, he was pitted against bulls.

Obviously, they weren't literal bulls but resembled them a lot. According to Astaroth, these creatures were called Deulls, short for Dead Bulls and despite how the name sounded, it fit perfectly as the bulls looked like they were dead.

Don't be mistaken, they were only dead based on their 'appearance'. In reality, they were livelier than actual bulls. They had a low level of intelligence but were highly aggressive. As soon as they see a living creature, they would try their best to stomp them to death.

It was because of that reason, that most of them travelled alone or at most with a mate. They could not tolerate the presence of anyone around them at all.

But this only made it easier for Ashton to hunt them down. As a result, his werewolf genes had levelled up to level 25. While his vampire and undead genes were at 22 and 24 respectively.

"Maybe I should learn more about the skill I got after reaching level 20 with vampire genes."

[You really need to change your habits of ignoring important things.]

"How was I supposed to read a barrage of texts while fending off two Deulls at the same time?" Ashton chowed down the seared flesh before opening the prompt.

it seemed like despite what Ashton believed earlier, the genes worked differently and were awarded bonuses differently as well.

For example, he got the first choice of his skills for werewolf genes when he hit level 10. But he only got the same choice for the vampiric genes when he hit level 20 whereas he was yet to receive any such ability for the zombie genes even though those genes were already at level 24.

"Blood Armour. Hm... I can definitely make good use of this skill."

Unlike [Blood Mist] and [Blood Poison] both of which were aggressive, damage-causing skills, [Blood Armour] was a defensive skill. Also, in the case of [Blood Poison] and [Blood Mist], he had to use his own blood in order to use the ability, however, he didn't have to bleed himself to utilise this skill.

He could use anyone's blood to materialise an armour around himself or a target of his choice to protect them from receiving any sort of damage from anyone as it provided 70% damage reduction on all attacks. On top of that, the skill did not have a duration and only consumed 10 mana per use.

This meant, that as long as he has a continuous supply of blood, he could keep the armour on for as long as he wanted and could give it to as many people as he could without breaking a sweat.

This skill was a blessing, to say the least. Especially in the upcoming battle where there would be no shortage of blood for him to use.

However, there was a drawback to this skill too. Every time he ends up using the skill to protect someone new, the mana cost of the next cast would increase by 20%.

"For now, it isn't much of a drawback as the initial mana cost is low, and I don't have many people to protect, to begin with."

Much like [Aggravate] skill, [Blood Armour] skill was a growth-type skill as well. In other words, the stronger he got, the stronger the skill became.

"Having achieved two super rare skills, I hope the zombie genes provide me with another broken skill."

[Talk about being a greedy bastard.]

"That's hilarious coming from you."

[Do you want a penalty quest?]

"Do you want to die for real?"

[...Truce?]

"Truce."

These banter with Astaroth were slowly becoming a part of Ashton's daily routine. He felt like, even though they started off on the wrong foot, they were slowly becoming somewhat friendly to each other, which was surprising as Astaroth had mentioned his wish of taking over Ashton's body multiple times now.

After eating his fill and resting for a bit, Ashton decided to head deeper. While killing the night creature around the entrance was an easier way to farm some exp, Ashton had realised something.

The deeper he went, the stronger Deulls got and just like everything, Astaroth had a theory for this phenomenon as well.

It was clear the Deulls did not want to be in presence of each other. This meant they were bound to fight over their 'territory'. Also, the farther away from the entrance their territory was, the safer they would be from intruders.

Upon careful observation, it was safe to say the weaker bulls were pushed farther and farther away from the centre of the catacombs. While the stronger ones reigned over the deeper parts of the catacombs.

That's why Ashton was headed towards the centre. Killing and feasting on that creature would help him immensely to reach level 30 and unlock his ability to use the Wraith Wolves anywhere he liked.

[By the way, are you sure it is the right to unveil your secret? I would strongly recommend that you think about it again.]

"You said it yourself. Once all my genes hit level 30, my cumulative level would be somewhere between level 60 to level 65. With strength like that, I do not need to worry about anyone killing me. As far as I'm aware, Alucard would be the only one who would be able to outrank me."

[I'm not afraid of creatures of this planet either. I'm afraid of those who can destroy the planet anytime they deemed fit.]

"Xyrans?"

[Them and a few other races.]

"Then what do you suggest I do? Let Mera triumph over me in hopes that someone from a higher civilisation would attack her later on?" Ashton shook his head, "Either way, this was your plan so why are you having second thoughts now?"

[Hm... you got me there. Let's proceed as planned, we'll cross the bridge when we get there.]

"Agreed."

## Chapter 229 The Battle Of Livan (1)

Days passed quicker than Virgil had expected and yet there was no sign of Aston coming back. No one was saying it out loud, but their lord's disappearance wasn't going unquestioned. Now was the time they needed him the most since he had provoked the Morgans. But he was nowhere to be found.



Some of them were even going as far as saying Ashton had abandoned them to save his own butt, while the others had the opinion that he was busy with negotiations with the rest of the nobility so that he could prevent war at all cost.

Nevertheless, the number of people who thought the latter was dwindling sharply as days passed. The only solace they had was the presence of the royal knights around them. With them by their side, the enemies would have to consider twice before engaging them.

Apart from that, just like Ashton had instructed them, Baiter had built an underground bunker with enough space for all the citizens to stay safe, just in case, their hands were forced into a war. That's why all the important figures in Ashton's forces had gathered there to discuss their next move.

"We did the best we could, considering the resources we had." Virgil informed the rest of them, "The defences are good, however, it would stop them indefinitely. We will need the help from the citizens to keep the enemies at bay till the Lord returns."

"I am well aware of that, Virgil." Sheera replied, "But a week's worth of training wouldn't be near enough for them to take on professionally trained soldiers."

"Dame Sheera is correct. At most they'll make a good meatshield but nothing more." Irina chimed in.

Although she wasn't officially a part of Ashton's army, they were close and no one wanted to piss off Alucard's daughters so no one objected as the sister joined the meeting. That being said, the sisters were a bit taken aback by Ashton's sudden departure, but then decided to help him out by assisting his people with various things around the city.

To be honest, they were frankly just as skilled as Baiter when it came to architectural stuff. Probably because, unlike the werewolves, the vampires were a species that appreciated brains along with a bit of brawn.

Everyone looked a bit stunned at Irina's suggestion. Although what she said could be a bit viable, none of them wanted to do something like that. But they could do something along the lines of that using Morgan's soldiers they had captured.

All of a sudden their meeting was cut short by a panicking soldier rushing into the room.

"What is the meaning of this?" Sheera immediately roared, snapping the soldier back to reality.

However, through his ragged breath, it was impossible to explain anything. Therefore, he simply pointed outside. All of them took notice of the man and went outside, only to be greeted by a horrifying sight.

In front of the city, more than thirty thousand soldiers were standing in neat rows and columns and not ten thousand soldiers as they had expected. The citizens were struck with fear while the same could be said for most of the soldiers.

How could they not act terribly? They were outnumbered by 60 to 1. Even in their best scenario, it wasn't possible for them to come out of this alive.

However, that wasn't all. Far behind the soldiers, a few people could be seen standing. It was clear who they were. It was Mera along with...

"Wait, is it for real?" Virgil asked as he passed the binoculars to Sheera.

"No way in hell." Sheera aggressively shook her head, "Co-operation is a different thing but this! No member of the nobility would allow such humiliation on their shoulders. At least not willingly."

"What is it?" Verina asked the duo while the rest of them rushed to guide the people into the bunker.

Sheera didn't reply and instead handed the binoculars to her. Verina hastily turned her attention in the direction they had been looking and it was safe to say, she did not take it well. Despite being a vampire, she was well aware of how beloved honour and respect were to the werewolves.

Therefore, watching their supposed noble leaders being chained like dogs was a bit surprising. Both Bishop and Marcee were naked and on their knees behaving like dogs while Mera commanded their forces along with hers.

"Now I know why Ashton hates her so much." Verina shook her head in disappointment, "Someone with a twisted mind like hers does not deserve to be alive."

"I couldn't agree more." Virgil was quick to chime in.

Sheera, however, did not say a word. Her training prohibited her from badmouthing royalty, no matter how much they deserved it. But no amount of training could stop her from taking action against someone who threatened her lord.

"Prepare yourselves for battle!" She yelled at the top of her lungs as soldiers quickly got into position.

Virgil and the rest of them the command as well. However, Sheera stopped Irina and Verina from helping out in the battle unless there were no other options. Although they were annoyed by the suggestion, they knew it was for the best.

Their odds weren't getting any better and thus by endangering their life, the vampire sisters could potentially turn out to be the reason for the Vampire's invasion of Lycania, and that would be a much worse situation than the one they were facing at the moment.

"I will contact his highness the king and ask for backup. We're not sure whether he is truly supporting Mistress Mera or not and if he is... well, then we're fucked either way." Sheera said before rushing to the side.

"There is no point in setting up defences morons!" Mera's magnified voice echoed through the air, "As long as your lord surrenders himself, there won't be any bloodshed. I swear it on my deceased mother's grave!"

"There's no need to swear on your mother's grave. You can swear it upon your own!" Virgil was quick to reply.

Although he sounded confident, what he said was to merely cheer up the soldiers, all of whom were most likely going to die soon. However, it didn't seem like Mera liked his rebuttal and the next moment the enemies charged straight at them.

"Oh shit..."

## Chapter 230 The Battle Of Livan (2)

Meanwhile, Ashton had finally managed to enter the deepest section of the catacombs, where the last Deull should be residing. However, he quickly released that he wasn't the first person to find the main room, judging from the skeletons scattered all over the place.

Some of it belonged to other Deulls and a few other creatures, while the rest of it belonged to humans and werewolves alike. They were probably the miners who went a little too deep and ended up dying at the hands of the Deulls.

"It is eerily silent here," Ashton mumbled softly, however, his voice echoed louder than ever.

[Relax, you're stronger than before remember?]

"Yeah, I'm still stuck at level 28. So I don't know if I am as strong as I wanted to be. If this Deull doesn't give me a hell of an exp, then I'm screwed."

This time Astaroth had nothing to say to him. Because he wasn't so sure about it himself. If Ashton failed to hit level thirty on his werewolf genes, he was pretty much screwed, as he said... or was he?

Thanks to sacrificing his sleep, he was already on level 29 with both Vampire and Zombie genes. But his werewolf skill did not seem to be going up by much despite him killing more Deulls than in the previous days.

It was probably because the levelling requirements of werewolf genes depended on fighting stronger opponents. While the Deulls had become... somewhat of an easy prey for Ashton. So much so, that it was safe to say he could kill a bunch of them in his sleep without getting injured.

[You won't be screwed. As long as your other genes get to level 30, you will be able to participate in the battle that's most likely to break out. You can farm exp for your werewolf genes then.]

Ashton nodded and kept walking deeper. He knew he was headed in the right direction as the number of skeletons along with the stench of death increased more and more.

"It's a good thing there are so many bones here. I can easily summon a Bone Goliath to help me out if need be."

[Elemental Goliath] was the skill Ashton received as soon as he hit level 25 with his zombie genes. However, unlike the previous times, he did not receive options to choose his skills from. Instead, he simply received a notification stating that based on his current skills and Necromancy class he was being awarded a new skill.

At first, he was a bit confused about what a summoning skill like [Elemental Goliath] had to do with necromancer class. But all the confusion was removed when he realised what the term elemental meant in this case.

It wasn't actual elements like earth, water, wind, fire etc, that could be used to summon a goliath. But elements related to his necromancy class such as blood, bones, and ashes could be used as a medium to summons a giant to help him.

That being said, it was mentioned that each of those elements would summon a goliath with different properties. However, it was up to him to discover those properties as it didn't mention anything about the said properties anywhere in the skill description.

Also, the only reason he wasn't summoning one to check their properties now was because of how costly doing so was. No matter what medium Ashton chose to summon a goliath, it would end up using 90% of his mana, leaving him unable to use any other skill while the mana slowly regenerated.

Thankfully, Astaroth was kind enough to let Ashton know about the said properties so that he didn't waste any of his precious mana.

The [Bone Goliath] was possibly the sturdiest goliath he could summon. It was excellent for defensive purposes while not so good at offence.

The [Blood Goliath] was the complete opposite of the [Bone Goliath] and had extremely high offensive abilities, but shitty defence. But it could take a bit of beating if need be by sharing the HP of his summoner.

And lastly, the [Ashen Goliath]. It was neither good at offence nor defence. But what it was good at was stealth and could hide the presence of up to a dozen people as long as they were hiding underneath his shadow.

But to summon either of these goliaths, there had to be a sufficient amount of medium. One can't summon any of the goliaths with a small number of bones, blood or ash left after incinerating corpses. Then there was the issue of cooldown. Ashton could only summon the Goliath once a day.

Suddenly a faint noise of a series of explosions could be heard. Under normal circumstances, Ashton would have ignored it and carried on with his task, but this time he knew something was wrong.

As far as he knew, only Baiter was able to make such high damage-causing explosives and Ashton had instructed him to use those explosions only when it was absolutely necessary. The loud explosions would also serve as a signal for Ashton to know the unthinkable has happened.

"Fuck, she's already here!" Ashton forgot about everything about stealth and began running deeper without any fear of anyone, "I have to kill that Deull and get going ASAP."

However, no matter where he looked he could not find the bastard. It was as if the Deull wanted to play hide and seek with him. Ashton was running out of time. The longer he lingered here, the more danger his people would have to face.

"Fuck this, I'm heading back."

[Calm the fuck down! You won't be able to do much even if you leave without levelling up the rest of your genes!]

"I have a plan."



Ashton began backtracking his steps and soon found a half-eaten corpse that he had left behind and began chowing it down. It gave him 1% exp for both vampire and zombie genes for every mouthful chunk he consumed.

It was a time-consuming process as eating from the same corpse only gave 1% of exp as mentioned before, but it was better than playing hide and seek with a night creature.

"Just hold on everyone, I'm on my way."