

Zompiewolf 371

Chapter 371 Spar (2)

All of them moved to the training grounds. The place looked like a deserted playground with overgrown grass and stuff, but with a press of a button, the scenery changed instantly.

The green field was replaced with a sandy desert. Ashton and Vimur walked inside while the rest of them took seats in the pavilion that was protected by a magic barrier. No matter how strong Vimur and Ashton were, there was no way they would be able to break a barrier that could sustain attacks of tens of A-grade beings.

"I can't wait to see the kid's face after he gets defeated by a tank of all things." Avvo, a blonde female Giholo excitedly watched on as the competitor assumed their positions.

"I don't like Vimur all that much... But I hope he wins." Laihud, the healer of the group shyly commented.

Soon all of them began expressing their opinions and none of them believed someone like Ashton would be able to defeat a Rank-7 mercenary. No matter how strong the kid was, Vimur had more experience than him and for a mercenary, the battle experience was the only thing that mattered.

"Alright, you two, listen up." Mazton made an announcement, "Since the operation will commence tomorrow, I'd suggest that you take care of your opponent's well-being. Finding a replacement on such short notice would be problematic so keep that in mind while exchanging blows."

Since the target they were supposed to protect was going to arrive tomorrow, a light spar between the team members wasn't going to harm anyone. At least Mazton hoped so. But it seemed that his hopes might not end up being valued.

"We can break each other's bones, right?" Vimur smirked.

"...Yes, broken bones can be treated in a matter of hours here so it shouldn't be a problem," Mazton replied expressionlessly but he wasn't all that happy with Vimur's comment.

"Haha, then it's fine." Vimur smiled before turning his attention towards Ashton, "Sorry kid, but I'll be breaking quite a few of your bones today."

Ashton did not respond to his obvious taunts and assumed his fighting position. What was the point in talking trash? He would rather make his opponents one with trash instead.

'Maybe I should have controlled my emotions,' Mazton thought, 'I get that I wanted to know more about Reaper's capabilities, but Vimur is a tanker whose strength is as brutal as his defence. But if Reaper had defeated the Hydra, taking care of Vimur shouldn't be a tough task.'

Vimur didn't waste any time and fiercely charged toward Ashton. The sound of his steps reverberated around the training grounds. The sound was accompanied by short but noticeable shockwaves.

Ashton couldn't help but admire Vimur's stepping technique. His movements were precise and swift. It almost felt as if he was drawing his strength from the ground itself.

"Look alive kid!" Vimur exclaimed as he curved his fist to go in for a crushing blow.

Vimur was excited because he knew his victory was certain. No matter how strong Ashton was, he wouldn't be able to take on the full might of his blow. Especially at this close range.

A moment later, Vimur hurled his fist at Ashton who still stood there like a mannequin. When Vimur saw his expressionless face, he thought Ashton was dumbfounded by his strength, since Vimur was a tank and not a brawler.

A cloud of dust rose to the air as Vimur's blow landed on the child. It was over... in a single strike. As usual, it was an overwhelming victory for Vimur.

"Tsk, here I thought the kid would last for a minute, at the very least." Avvo scoffed before getting up, "What a disappointment."

"I wouldn't be so sure of it, just yet." Thrith, the team's primary brawler and a rank-6 mercenary stopped Avvo in her tracks, "Sit down and watch. The spar isn't over yet."

"What do you mean? Don't tell me you really think the kid would be left standing after-" Avvo began chewing Thrith down, but stopped abruptly as the dust cloud settled down, "What in the great Seraph's name is going on here..."

Avvo wasn't the only one who was having a tough time believing her eyes. Vimur's brutal punch was known to blow the heads of numerous c-grade monsters with ease... and yet, it couldn't take down a kid?

Not only Vimur's brutal attack was stopped, but it couldn't even push Ashton back, not one inch. Ashton had comfortably stopped his punch with his palm. While the mercenaries were busy wondering whether something was wrong with their eyes, Mazton couldn't help but smile. Initially, he had his reservations, but now he completely believed Ashton was a capable warrior.

"It wasn't bad. Not at all." Ashton emotionlessly mumbled, "But it could have been a lot more devastating if you focused more on the punch itself, rather than the theatrics leading up to it. Then you might have been able to push me back just a teeny bit."

Rather than replying, Vimur launched a barrage of deadly blows on Ashton. But much to his dismay and others' surprise, not a single of his blows even came close to scratching Ashton.

No matter how much force Vimur put behind his fist, Ashton effortlessly blocked them as if an infant was punching him. Seeing as his fists weren't working, Vimur decided to use his legs. But even that plan failed. Nothing was working on the kid... nothing at all!

The longer the spar dragged on, the more disbelief amassed in the eyes of the mercenaries. Little did they know, while Vimur's fists carried explosive power behind them, thanks to the [Draconic Physique] the effect of his blows was getting negated since Vimur was using physical attacks only.

"It was fun, but now it's getting boring." Ashton flexed his muscles and readied himself to deliver the final blow.

Everyone was so preoccupied and amazed with his defence skills, that they hadn't noticed Ashton had not fought back a single time. He was only focused on defending himself. Ashton roughly used 50% of his true strength and threw a punch at Vimur.

A moment later, he was sent flying like a bullet to the opposite end of the room, leaving a trail of dust behind him. Vimur tried to get back up, but his chest was a mess. He was supposed to be the one to break bones, instead, he ended up with a fractured ribcage.

Vimur was down and out for good. Ashton then turned his attention towards the rest of the mercenaries who had been gawking at him in shock.

"Anyone else wants to test me?" He asked with all seriousness in his voice, but no one accepted his challenge, "Thought so."

Chapter 372 The Ruler Of Hearts

"Haha, congratulations on your win!" Mazton laughed As soon as they returned from the training grounds, "I wouldn't have expected anything less from the current Fourth monarch of Euphoria."

The rest of the team had barely managed to make peace with Ashton's absurd strength when Mazton dropped another bomb on them.

"Wait wait wait... he's what?" Avvo was baffled and thought she heard wrong.

"The fourth seat holder of Euphoria," Mazton replied as if it was a well-known fact, "You must know about Euphoria, right?"

"Who doesn't? But still, it comes off as a surprise..." Laihud remarked before curtly bowing to Ashton, "No wonder Vimur wasn't a match for you, sir. I am a resident of the planet, when I heard from my family someone overthrew Lord Jacklin, I thought it had to be someone... a bit on the older side. My apologies for not recognising you earlier."

"Please drop the honorifics," Ashton coldly asked Laihud, "I'm just a mercenary like you. Also, since I left Euphoria, technically, I'm not the fourth monarch."

Ashton might have said that, but it still did not change the fact that he was the one who did something deemed to be impossible. It wasn't because Jacklin was extraordinarily strong, but because one would have to clear an impossible trial before even challenging a monarch.

There were a lot of other things the mercenaries wanted to ask Ashton. But they didn't because of his insistence. He did not want them to leak crucial information about him, and the best way to do so was to make them silent either by asking them or by... silencing them forever.

Once Vimur was defeated, no one else had any doubts about Ashton's capabilities. On paper, he might have been a D-grade mercenary, but his strength surpassed even that of Grade-Cs. Vimur was immediately carried to the infirmary and the team was instructed to make themselves comfortable inside the meeting room while Vimur recovered.

Vimur rejoined them after an hour or so, and all of them were given the official job request to accept. The details of the report were the same as that in the official job description. The only difference was that the name of their target was specified in the job description.

You have accepted a Mercenary Job request!

Mercenary Job Title: Protecting a celebrity.

Job type: Escorting, Guarding and Combat Oriented job. Might also require a bit of stealth to help the employer escape from dire situations.

Job Introduction: A hit has been issued by the terrorist organisation: Metal Sharks, on a famous celebrity known across the galaxy due to some of her comments against the terrorist organisation. Your Job is to accompany her from Kernel Tower to her family home on the planet, Pegasi B2, protect her for the duration of her stay and then return to the Kernel Tower with along with her.

Mission requirement: Defend the Ruler of Hearts, Eula.

Probable difficulty: Intermediate to Hard

Failing Condition: Failure to protect the target.

Punishment of Failed Mission: -200 Mercenary Reputation, -5 Fame, Permanent black spot on your resume.

,m Reward: 5000 Yenos + bonus based on performance (per participant), +600 Mercenary Reputation, +20 Fame and A weapon / gear / material of choice (Rare grade only)

Time until activation: 16 hours and 34 minutes.

'So her name is Eula...' Ashton thought, 'Now I know why those terrorists were acting so bloodthirsty. She might have hurt their egos somehow.'

[I don't understand one thing. If you are weak, then why the hell do you need to speak against someone much stronger than yourself? Is common sense not so common these days?]

'It's called freedom of speech, but you won't understand it. Considering how the Xyrans only silence the voices against them.'

[I can't refute that even if I wanted to.]

Everyone slowly finished reading the file and turned attention toward Mazton who wanted to share some more information. He began giving them classified information about the two remaining assassins that had not been included in the file they were provided with earlier.

However, Ashton had already read about the remaining two jokers, that too in detail. Otiga had given him the information he asked for and it barely took her an hour to do so. Now Ashton just wanted to confirm whether the information she gave him was correct or not.

'There can be thousands of assassins one could hire,' Ashton thought, 'That's why I can't be sure whether Otiga's hunch about them was on point or not.'

Once Mazton pulled out the information, to Ashton's surprise, Otiga's intel proved to be correct. The first one of the two assassins was an alien known as Grezur. From a physical point of view, he looked like a gorilla more than anything. Except he did not have additional arms and was roughly about 6'9" tall.

His face was littered with scars, some were caused while combat, while the rest were carved onto his body by himself. As for his portfolio, so far he had completed 98 known assassinations. The most prominent one was an assassination he did while he was working as a mercenary... and it happened inside the Kernel tower.

Grezur was the only one who ever managed to kill a high-value target under Kernel Tower's protection and manage to leave alive. The tower's reputation took quite a hit because of that incident. Even now a few people had their concerns when it came to seeking protection from the tower.

So much so, that the Lord of the tower had to publically issue an apology for the mistakes of the mercenary association. It was the single most humiliating memory Mazton had. That was the reason why he was dead set on making sure the same thing doesn't happen this time.

"I'm giving you people a personal mission as well," Mazton informed them, "If Grezur appears in your sight, bring me his head. But don't forget that your primary goal is to protect Eula from the attacks. So focus on her safety first. As for the last suspect..."

The slide changed once again and this time Otiga's report had an error. The person in front of Ashton's eyes was no alien, but a human. A human whom he knew pretty well... pretty much his entire life, in fact.

"What kind of sick joke is this?" Ashton slammed his fists on the table, immediately shattering it, "Why are you showing the image of my dead father in place of the assassin!?"

Chapter 373 The Phantom

The room was stunned into silence after Ashton's outburst. Although he had only lost his composure for a second, it was enough for the security protocols to kick in. Within moments, guards rushed into the meeting room, their weapons ready to obliterate Ashton's brain.

If it hadn't been for Mazton's intervention, that would have been the end of Ashton's life, right then and there.

"Stand down, I have everything under control here." Mazton ordered the guards, "Return to your posts, your presence is not needed here."

"But Admiral-" One of the guards tried to argue, but Mazton had none of it.

"I think you have already been given your orders, captain. Go and make yourself useful elsewhere."

Mazton waved his hand and the guards left without another word. Still, a bunch of guards were stationed right outside the meeting room in case they needed to intervene in the matter.

Once they had left, Mazton looked around the meeting room and it wasn't in good shape. Ashton might not have intended to do something like that, but his outburst had nearly destroyed the room. A room designed to withstand even the biggest of Asteroid impacts was now filled with cracks all around the place.

Mazton was the only one who had regained his composure following the outburst. The rest of the squad was quite shaken, especially Vimur when he realised Ashton had gone easy on him during their spar.

"Do you have any idea how expensive constructing one of these rooms is? I sure as hell not giving you a penny-"

Avvo immediately shouted at Ashton, but one look from him was enough to silence her. Right now, he did not care about her or anyone in the room for that fact. The only one who had his attention was Mazton.

"What is the meaning of this?" Ashton asked while trying to calm down his raging nerves.

"First breathe, I promise I'll answer whatever you want to ask to the best of my ability, before doing anything else," Mazton replied and sat back down before gesturing Ashton to do the same.

It took a couple of minutes for Ashton to calm down. But as he did, he nearly broke down. Hundreds of questions were going rampant in his head. But the most obvious one was whether the man he saw in the image, was really his father.

Another look at the image clarified his doubt instantly. The man in the image definitely looked like his father. It had been over twelve years since he saw him, but the moment Ashton saw the mark on the man's cheek, he knew the assassin was his father. There was no other explanation for the assassin to have the same mark on his cheek, even if he was a lookalike of his father's.

This revelation brought along another series of questions with it. The last thing Ashton remembered about his father was, that he had been sent over to the undead territory as an offering to make peace between them and the werewolves. Then what the hell was he even doing in space?

Also, the file mentioned that the assassin in question had been active for the last decade. This meant his father had been free from the undead's captivity for such a long time but never returned to see him or even Avalina. Why would he not help out his son and wife after being freed from his shackles?

Well, Ashton wasn't his biological son so it would make sense, in a twisted logic, that he did not help him. But Avalina was his wife! There couldn't possibly be any reason for him to not try and rescue her from the vampires.

[Ashton... your rampant thoughts are not going to help you in this stage. Let them go and listen to what the Admiral has to say. Maybe it'll help you out deduce some theories about your father's presence in space.]

Ashton nodded and took a deep breath. It was as Astaroth said, brainstorming wasn't going to help him, and then there was the mess he created... it wasn't looking good for a mercenary on his first day.

"My apologies," Ashton curtly bowed his head in Mazton's direction before continuing, "I shouldn't have lost my composure. At least not in the way I did. It's just that... my father- I mean, the person in the image looks a lot like my father whom I thought had died more than a decade ago. Watching his image after all this time made me lose my shit for a moment."

"I understand," Mazton dismissively waved his hand, "Believe me when I say this, I had my own share of daddy issues, so I know how you feel. It's all water under the bridge... for now. That being said... you might not like what I'm about to tell you about the assassin known as the Phantom."

And so, Admiral Mazton began explaining everything he, or anyone for that matter, knew about Phantom. The 'faceless' assassin first made his debut a decade ago. As every other bigshot in the industry, he began doing little things here and there, until one day he killed one of the biggest businessmen established in the Orion belt of the galaxy.

The fact that he killed such a big personality wasn't as shocking as the fact of how he managed to do it. Unlike any other assassin, he didn't hide nor did he stealthily pull a miracle. All he did was to walk, kill the businessman, and then calmly walked out. Everyone saw him, yet no one saw anything suspicious.

"Interestingly, the one who walked into the mansion, the one who killed the businessman and the one who walked out of the mansion were three different men," Mazton sighed, "Well, technically, it was the same man in different forms. He entered the mansion as a security executive, met and killed the businessman as one of his mistresses, and walked out of the place as a paramedic."

He continued, "Within twenty-four hours we found out all three people he disguised himself as, were already dead and had been for over a week. This gave us a theory to work with. The Phantom has the ability to perfectly mimic anyone he kills, regardless of their age, race and gender. It was because of this alleged ability he was given the name, 'Phantom'."

Ever since then, he had been on a killing spree, using the same pattern and yet no one was able to stop him. His efforts finally paid off when he made it to the list of top five assassins for hire.

Considering how he never failed any mission given to him, he was one of the favourites to be hired. Also, Phantom was the man who killed the high-profile target inside the Kernel Tower. That was the kind of assassin he was... daring, enigmatic and untouched.

"The image I showed you was a photograph from his most recent assassination. It is possible that's not how he looks at all." Mazton clenched his fists in anger, "It is harder to predict what he is about to do, especially because no one even knows what he looks like."

However, Ashton wasn't paying attention to any of it anymore and Mazton knew exactly why.

"I'm sorry about telling you all this," Mazton said while caressing Ashton's shoulders.

No matter how strong Ashton was, he was still a kid and this information could prove to be a bit too much for him.

From what Mazton had just told him, Ashton could come up with two scenarios. Either the phantom had killed his father and was using his identity to do more of his dirty work or his father was the phantom and was alive but on the wrong side of the galactic civilisation.

If the first case was true, then he swore he would be the one to capture and give the bastard the most horrid death possible. A death that would brand him as the most psychotic person in the galaxy. Well, this would be the easier possibility to handle out of the two.

,m That being said, he had no idea what he would do if the Phantom turns out to be his father. The mercenary association wants his head and most likely the rest of the galaxy does as well. There was no way in hell they would allow someone like him to roam freely in the galaxy.

The more he thought about it, the more sickening the situation became. On one hand, he would be happy to meet his father again, but then... he knew he would have to do the obvious thing and deal with him.

'If only I was strong enough!' He cursed himself.

If only he had been an S-grade being, he too would be able to do whatever he pleased without facing any repercussions. Sadly, that wasn't the case. The only thing he could do now was to pray for one of two things.

Either the Phantom wasn't his father, but his killer or the Phantom does not accept the assassination job or show up to kill Eula at all.

Chapter 374 Meeting A Goddess... Figuratively (1)

The team was given the rest of the time off and prepare for their mission. As for the damage Ashton caused... he would have to pay for it, there was no way around it. If he was to believe Mazton's words, the cost of building one impenetrable was a small amount of 200,000 Yenos while repairing one should cost around 125,000 Yenos.

Even though it was a 'small' amount for Mazton, gathering the amount was no joke for a mercenary at Ashton's level. He would have to save up for a long time to repay the money. Thankfully, Mazton was kind enough to help him.

Seeing as Ashton would not be able to return the money any time soon, Mazton came up with a payment plan for him. Mazton would pay for the damages now and Ashton would have to pay him back.

Ashton could pay the money in as many instalments as he wanted, without an interest rate too. As for payment, for every job he completes 50% of his pay would be docked and would go towards the repayment of his 'loan'.

This was the best plan for now, as Mazton was more than willing to keep the matter under the covers. If he wanted, he could have refused to help Ashton and watch on as his favorability with the association dropped astronomically. That would have hurt Ashton a lot worse than receiving a reduced pay.

[You good?]

'Yeah...'

[Stop sulking around. Why don't you try looking at the brighter side?]

'Brighter side? Tell me which side is brighter? The one in which my father got killed by some psycho killer or the one in which he became the psycho killer.'

[Um... yeah... my bad.]

Ashton sighed as he rolled in his bed. His thoughts were getting a bit erratic by now. However, he wasn't as clueless as the rest of them because unlike the rest of the team. After all, he had a way to know whether the Phantom was his father or not and the only thing he needed to find that out was one look.

Just one look through [Detection] and everything would become crystal clear. No matter how good a person was at disguising themselves, they won't be able to dodge [Detection].

If it turned out the Phantom wasn't his father, then Ashton would be able to deal with him. Even if he turned out to be his father, he would still deal with him... in a different way of course.

'Should I tell mom about it...? No. Not yet.'

The only thing he wasn't certain of was his mother's reaction. It had been over a decade since they were forcefully separated. On top of that, everyone knew it wasn't child's play to survive in the undead region back on earth.

With these points counted, Avalina most likely believed that her husband was dead. Everyone did. However, if Ashton informed her about the truth about the Phantom it would break her regardless of the truth.

As such, he was contemplating not telling her about it no matter the result. She had already suffered a lot, there was no way in hell Ashton was going to let her suffer anymore.

While he was thinking about all that, the Kernel Tower was placed under lockdown. No one was allowed to enter or leave the space station for a couple of days. This was a countermeasure they did not take the last time as it was a hindrance to their business. But this time, Mazton wasn't ready to leave a single stone unturned.

Still, in Ashton's eyes, this move was a bold yet useless move. After reading the Phantom's file, he had gotten to know a bit more about the mysterious assassin.

He was someone who prepared his plans months in advance. As a professional, he wouldn't make any hasty decisions and carefully pick the targets which he would like to turn into. It was likely, that he had already infiltrated the tower long ago. That is if he was planning on killing Eula while she was inside the Tower.

However, the same fact worked in the mercenaries' favour as well. It had only been a week since the hit was ordered, therefore it was most likely the Phantom did not get enough time to prepare for the task and did not accept the job. At this time, Ashton could only hope that was the case. If it wasn't, well, he'll simply have to deal with it.

At this point, there was a knock on his door. Ashton pulled Balmond out of the inventory and hid it behind the door before showing himself. It could be possible the Phantom was behind the door waiting to lunge at him as soon as he opened the door.

"Who is it?"

"Ena-117, sir. I'm here with the information you requested." The robot replied, but Ashton did not open the door, not yet.

"What is the colour of a blackhole?" He asked through the door.

It was the sequential password Mazton had come up with to try and negate the possibility of the Phantom gaining access to anyone involved in the mission.

"You should try asking your mother. She got a blackhole in herself." The robot replied and Ashton opened the doors, allowing her entry, "You have no idea how vulgar it felt to say that out loud, sir."

"If you want to complain, contact the Admiral. It wasn't my idea to make such a bizarre password." Ashton shrugged before accepting the tablet from Ena's hands, "It contains the information of everyone involved in the operation, correct?"

"Yes. Admiral Mazton himself has confirmed the details. No one other than the ones listed is allowed to remain inside the tower." Ena replied, "As per your request, I have also added the name of the robots currently stationed aboard the ship."

"Thanks, you can leave now."

Ena excused herself and was about to leave when her curiosity got the best of her, "If you don't mind me asking, why did you request that information of all things?"

"Your voice might be emotionless, but your intentions aren't. Don't worry, I'm not the phantom if that's what you're worried about." Ashton replied while casually flipping through the tabs, "Aside from that, if you're wondering what I would do if the guy is my father, then rest assured, I know not to mix business and family together. I hope that puts your mind at ease."

"Yes... my apologies for wasting your time." Ena apologised and left the room while Ashton memorised the details of everyone involved in the mission.

Chapter 375 Meeting A Goddess... Figuratively (2)

The next day...

Everyone remaining on the tower had gathered at the landing port located at the top of the tower. This port was only used for two kind of individuals, one was the lord of the tower and the second was for special guests.

Ashton had not seen who the Lord was, since he was an S-grader, his strength in the galaxy would be unimaginable. Even so, the guest arriving right now wasn't important enough for the Lord to show himself. That's why Mazton was the one waiting for Eula to step out of her ship to greet her.

As for the mercenaries, they were standing right behind Mazton so that Eula could be introduced to them as soon as possible. It didn't matter whether it was Vimur, Avvo or anyone else, all of them were excited to meet Eula.

How could they not be? Her succubus race itself was enough to make her popular in the galaxy, but her acting was even better. Yes, she was an actress and a singer, her mesmerising beauty and voice were more than enough for anyone to make her fall in love with her.

Ashton was pretty sure she had an ability or something that made everyone around her fall for her. After all, all succubi had similar abilities. That was probably the reason the guys were ready to kill other just to get a glimpse of her.

Everyone except Mazton and the robots was on their toes to greet her and get a close look at her beauty. Well, Ashton was an exception as well. He did not know nor cared about who she was and why was she so popular among the crowd.

For him, she was just a client to protect and a bait to lure out the enemies... possibly the phantom himself. Nothing else mattered to him as long as he could get his hands on him. As for his team, well, they weren't so keen on getting close to him either. Especially after what happened the previous that.

That's why rather than being in front and welcoming Eula like the rest of them, Ashton decided to hand back and observe everyone. Doing so also served the purpose of keeping them under his radar called [Detection].

He had already used it on the ones from the Tower's side, now he merely had to check the ones who got off the ship with Eula.

[Don't keep on abusing the skill so frequently. [Detection] might not consume mana but it can cause you mental strain making it difficult for you to focus.]

'I'm part undead. The thing called 'mental strain' doesn't exist for me.'

[I really can't with you... fine do whatever you like.]

'I wasn't asking for your permission, but thanks anyways.'

While Ashton was busy scanning the area for suspicious activity, the hatch of the 20 million Yenos worth spaceship opened up and out of it walked an armada. It would seem Eula had her own security with her.

Ashton looked at her security and wondered why would she even need the help of the mercenary association if she had so many guards on her. Ashton quickly went ahead and scanned the soldiers and realise why she needed more security.

They only had numbers and advanced weapons. Nothing else. Their stats, skills, level, everything about them was trash. A hundred C-grade soldiers with a handful of B-graders. It almost felt as if they were fresh graduates from some sort of police academy.

On the other hand, the team assembled by Mazton were all B-graders. Not to mention, as mercenaries, they also had ample combat experience on top of skills that were more useful than theirs.

Sadly, that did not stop them from behaving like assholes who had some authority over the mercenaries. The moment they walked out of the spaceship, they pushed everyone except Mazton away.

Everyone was a bit taken aback by their behaviour but stayed silent because Mazton had not said a word to them. The mercenaries looked like they were about to chew the brains of these moron soldiers, but remained calm.

'What did they expect them to do?' Ashton thought to himself, 'The guards have to be cautious. They pushed every back because they don't know them and also to protect their employer. For all they cared, one of us could be the phantom.'

[Still, pushing everyone back like they were a bunch of animals was a bit harsh. You can't deny that.]

'It might be, but it was the correct thing to do.'

Once everyone had settled down and the soldiers had established a perimeter around the spaceship, another hatch opened up and Eula walked out of there. After seeing her photographs, Ashton had said Anna was far more beautiful than her, but now that he could see her in front of him, the matchup didn't seem as one-sided as it did before.

In his eyes, Anna was still more attractive than Eula but he couldn't deny that even Eula wasn't short when it came to beauty. her face was covered with a veil, but even that couldn't hide her mysterious yellow eye from making her spectators' hearts flutter.

She wasn't alone either. Four beautiful faces closely tread behind her. According to the reports, all four of them were Eula's consorts and belonged to the race of Scalvi, creatures that had the ability to change their gender upon will.

Eula gracefully walked up to Mazton and bowed in front of him. All of her soldiers and consorts followed her lead to show respect to the Admiral.

"Great Admiral of the Kernel Tower, please accept my gratitude for helping me out in such dire times," Eula mumbled while her eye was fixated on Mazton's feet, "I will never forget your kindness till the day I take my last breath."

"I hope that day comes a long time after I take a step through the hell's doors." Mazton smiled as they raised themselves, "If there's anyone you should thank, it's these people. They are the ones who will be protecting you from now on."

Saying so, Mazton quickly introduced everyone to Eula and then it was finally Ashton's turn, "And last but not least, I'd like you to meet Reaper. He's our newest recruit but someone whom I deeply respect. I have no doubts he would be the best mercenary who would have your back during this trip."

Chapter 376 Meeting A Goddess... Figuratively (3)

Out of everyone in the crowd, no one was worthy enough to make Eula acknowledge them with more than a nod. That was until her eyes fell on Ashton. He did not have any traits that separated him from the rest of them, yet still, the moment she laid her eyes on him, she couldn't help but walk in his direction.

Everyone was confused by her reaction. Being a succubus, she usually distanced herself from unnecessary situations. The way she rejected the advances of various males and females was the reason she was loved more and more by her fans.

In some twisted logic of their own, the fans began to think she was a goddess protecting herself from the lustful ways of immoral people. That's how she had gained a nickname for herself, 'Hestia'.

Little did they know their 'Hestia' wasn't as pure as they had thought. Her four consorts might act as her assistants, but in reality, they were her partners who have devoted their lives to her. That being said, they were more of her playthings than anything else.

The only reason she had her consorts was for them to act as food sources for her. They might think they were important to her, but in reality, she was simply eating away their life force and would throw them aside the moment they lost their usefulness.

But she was by no means heartless. Even after she was done using them, she would make sure to take care of them financially. They wouldn't have to work for a single day for the rest of their lives. But she had to shorten their lives to live her own... that was a sad compromise she had made with her heart.

Her emotionless approach to others was the reason everyone was a bit surprised when she approached Ashton by herself. However, before she got too close to him, her consorts jumped in front of her and made a physical barrier between Ashton and her.

"Mistress, please step back. We don't know whether he's truly an ally or not." One of them spoke up.

At a glance, it would seem the consorts were doing this to protect their mistress, but in reality, they were acting out of jealousy. She already had four of them who could fulfil any of her desires, why would she need someone like a lowly mercenary?

However, Mazton was not impressed by them or their accusations. It hadn't been a moment when he had mentioned how good Ashton was, and these people dared to say he was suspicious. In Mazton's mind, the consorts were not doubting Ashton but Mazton's judgment. He wasn't pleased with their words and wasted no time speaking his mind out.

"Ahem... It would seem your people don't trust my judgement, madame." Mazton curtly responded, "But I wonder if they were so competent themselves, then why did you need to request our help?"

That statement immediately silenced the consorts who couldn't come up with any excuse. But they had to say something, so they went ahead rambling about random things like how they were only looking out for their mistress and whatnot.

"Since you can't protect your mistress, the least you can do is to show respect to the ones that can." Mazton didn't hold back this time, "I'm only tolerating your comments because of the lady. Had it been anyone else, I would have revoked the contract and kicked you off the space station the instant they doubted me or someone chosen by me."

The consorts tried to weasel their way out of the situation, but the more they spoke, the more irritated Eula got. They were acting on their own, but it was her relationship with the association that was getting affected because of their stupidity.

"Step aside..." Eula spoke in her gentle and calming voice.

However, the moment her consorts heard her voice, they went pale. Unlike the strangers, they were well-versed in knowing how she was feeling just by her voice, no matter how calm it was. At that moment, they knew their mistress was pissed and it was all thanks to them. Not wanting to anger her anymore, they stepped aside like babies in trouble.

"There's a weirdly soothing scent around you... A scent only people of my kind can produce." Eula asked Ashton while the males stared at him with jealousy, "You're not one of us... then how do you have it?"

"Hello to you too," Ashton emotionlessly replied, "As for your question, I have no idea what you're talking about."

"Have you been intimate with a succubus?" Eula cut him off and asked another question, much to Ashton's annoyance.

The last thing he wanted was to get noticed by her when he already had so much on his plate. Why couldn't she just let him do his job and distance herself from him? It wasn't like he was dying to get to know her.

Although she was technically his client, no one had any business putting their nose in his personal life. Their relationship should stay strictly professional and nothing else. But it did not look like Eula was going to leave him till he answered his question.

[Bullshit. Why don't you admit you're not telling them about Anna, because you don't want her to end up in trouble with the terrorists.]

'Sure, let me do that. Let me tell them I am in a relationship with Anna and let the Phantom know how to hurt me.' Ashton retorted, 'Sometimes I wonder if the xyrans killed you because you annoyed them with such stupid questions.'

[Heh... I thought hearing those words would hurt, but I guess I've gotten immune to your shit talking.]

While Ashton bickered with Astaroth, Eula still had her eye on him, expecting an answer from him. Ashton did not disappoint her either, he gave her an answer, but not the one she was hoping for.

"Apologies for being rude, but I fail to see how knowing about my personal life would be beneficial for the mission."

Ashton might have 'apologised' to her in advance, but judging by the tone of his voice, it did not seem to be the case. He was cold and stern. Everyone there was a bit baffled by her response.

No matter how cold-hearted someone was, there was no way they wouldn't melt under Eula's influence. But for some reason, it looked like Ashton could not give a shit about her or her questions.

Eula was just as shocked as the rest of them because it was the first time her charm did not work against a man, out of all the beings. If she only knew Ashton's [Charm Resistance] was far superior to anyone else present in the tower, thanks to having a succubus as his girlfriend.

"I-I see... please accept my sincere apology for trodding into your life." Eula regained her composure, "Admiral Mazton talked so highly of you, that I got a bit overzealous."

"No need to apologise, ma'am." Ashton replied, "However if you don't mind I would like to know who has been in charge of your security till now. I have some important matters to discuss with them."

"That would be me." A neatly dressed soldier stepped out of the ship, "Also, I would like it if you don't address a senior so casually. You can refer to me as Sir or Sergeant, nothing else."

Ashton sighed heavily. It was going to be a long month ahead of him, especially for his patience. It hadn't even been an hour since he met the idiots and they were already getting on his nerves.

'What's with these no-good retards and their toxic masculinity? They are acting as if I have turned their mistress into my bitch.'

[Oh, you would like that, won't you?]

'It's a wonder I can't tolerate them, but I can tolerate you. Judging how all of you tend to think with your secondary heads 24x7.'

[...]

"Whatever. I assume you have a list of all the soldiers under your command?" Ashton asked the 'sergeant'.

"Why would I do that? I know all of their names by face."

Ashton couldn't believe what he was listening to but remained calm.

"Is that so, then can you name him?" Ashton asked while randomly pointing at a soldier.

"That's Zumien-"

"Are you sure about it?"

"Kid, I know you are new in this field, but you do not have to-"

"What's your name, again?" Ashton immediately cut him off and prodded more into the sergeant.

The sergeant got startled as if he was trying to hide something. Ashton immediately caught on to him and without a moment's hesitation grabbed the man's collar before effortlessly lifting him off his feet.

"I will only ask one more time, what is your name?"

"It's Morrill! Morrill! I swear-"

Without wasting a moment, Ashton slammed him down so hard, that Morrill's rib cage was instantly cracked. While asking him questions, Ashton was using [Heartbeat Sense]. Thus he instantly knew the moment Morrill lied to him.

"What the hell are you doing?" Vimur shouted as the soldiers on Morrill's side appointed their weapons on Ashton.

"Weeding out the impostors. He's no Morrill, his real name is Vance, one of the assassins whose name wasn't in the final list of suspects." Ashton replied before stomping on Vance's hand, shattering it into pieces, "How many of you are there, tell me!"

At that moment, a few of the soldiers took their shot at Ashton. Despite hitting the mark, none of their plasma weapons had any effect on him.

"Looks like you all decided to ease my job," Ashton smiled before jumping into the crowd and attacking those who attacked him, while everyone watched on.

Chapter 377 Seer

Ashton barely took 10 minutes to take care of all the terrorists hiding within Eula's security forces. To everyone's surprise, out of the hundred, 36 soldiers were actually working with the terrorists. No one could even think how carefully they had planned the attack on her.

Once Eula and the rest were safe, the mercenaries took their sweet time to force the truth out of the terrorists. Each member of the team selected one of them and used their own methods to torture them.

it went without saying Ashton decided to interrogate the person who potentially had the most information... Morrill. Nobody knew what Ashton had done to him, but judging from Morrill's desperate cries for help... it wasn't pleasant, to say the least.

By the time Mazton returned to help out with the investigation, Ashton already had all answers to their questions. The terrorists easily invaded Eula's security force because of her panic-stricken state.

As soon as she got the death threat, she immediately issued a recruitment notice for bodyguards. She did so as she knew that the couple dozen of guards she had back then couldn't possibly defend her.

While she contacted the mercenary association for help, her consorts were responsible for making sure no one with fake IDs, mainly to weed out any potential terrorists in disguise, were able to enter the force. It was safe to say they did not do their job properly as the terrorists used fake IDs from academy graduate students to infiltrate Eula's security.

Ashton was honestly baffled by their negligence and incompetence. Had it not been for a few good recruits they accidentally hired and her previous bodyguards, Eula would have been killed long before she even placed a foot in the tower.

But thanks to this fact, the terrorists were unable to attack Eula. However, soon their plans turned even more sinister. Morrill decided that killing Eula wasn't going to be enough, thus he decided to get rid of the mercenaries that were assigned to her along with the legendary Admiral of the tower.

Had he managed to do so, his reputation among terrorists would transcend to limits he could never imagine achieving. In the end, his ambition screwed him over.

"Thankfully, a series of fortunate events spoiled their plans to kill Eula." Ashton completed his report, "However, when I tried to get information about other potential contract killers, Morrill lost his mind and bit his tongue to commit suicide."

Mazton sighed heavily while massaging his temples. The moment he accepted Eula's request, he knew it wasn't going to be easy for him. But he had not accepted trouble to appear even before the contract officially began. In hindsight, it didn't matter whether he knew about it or not.

"You did a great job." Mazton patted Ashton's shoulder, "Had it not been for you and your quick thinking, we would have lost a lot more people in the skirmish. Also, thank you for proving I wasn't wrong to assign you this mission."

"I'm just doing my job so that I can pay off my debt as soon as possible," Ashton curtly replied.

"Oh right... considering how you saved so many lives onboard, I guess we can do something about it." Mazton said with a smile, "I can't let you off the hook for payment, but I can reduce it... by half."

"That's good enough," Ashton replied, "Now if you don't mind, I have a few things to take care of."

Mazton allowed him to leave while he gathered reports from everyone else. As soon as Ashton was outside, he was greeted by the ugly sight of Avvo, who happened to be waiting outside for him. But Ashton was in no mood to talk, he tried ignoring her and walked away.

Avvo, however, was persistent. After all, being a Giholo, she was used to having males follow her around and not the other way. Ashton still ignored her, but her following him around was slowly getting on his nerves.

"What the hell do you want?"

"The truth," Avvo replied, "You might have fooled everyone else, but there is no way in hell you'd know that the sergeant was a fake. You are clearly hiding something and I wanna know what."

"The only thing I'm hiding is my nuts, wanna see them?" Ashton sarcastically commented.

"If it'll get closer me to the truth, then sure." Avvo shamelessly replied while getting awkwardly close to Ashton, "We can do this any way you want, but I'm not leaving before knowing what you're up to."

"You can keep thinking about whatever you want to. I couldn't care less."

Saying so Ashton turned around and was about to leave when Avvo yelled at him, "You are one of those rare Seers, aren't you? The ones who have the power to see different futures?"

Ashton was surprised to hear her talk. Although he had only been in space for a while now, it was the first time he had heard someone possessing the power to see the future.

'Astaroth, are there really people in the galaxy capable of visualising the future? The actual future?'

[Hm... I can't say for certain. But it could be possible. I mean there are people who are quite literally immune to death so it wouldn't surprise me if there are individuals capable of saying future. Why are you asking it though?]

'Hm... I would like to have that ability. It would be very useful, especially in combat if it could be used to literally see an enemy's next move.' Ashton had already begun thinking about the ways to effectively use such a broken skill.

"Your silence is enough to confirm my suspicions." Avvo said with a smirk, "Out of everything I have learned about you, your ability as a Seer is the one thing I'm jealous of."

"You can think whatever you want. I have no interest in correcting you," Ashton replied and left.

"Of course, you will not admit it to the very end. After all, Seers are always hunted down like living treasures and treated like slaves." Avvo mumbled and took a communicating device once Ashton was out of sight, "Hey James, I might have found something interesting for you. Also, I want a double commission for turning in this beast."

Chapter 378 Public Transportation (1)

As a result of all the commotion, the schedule had to be delayed and subsequently changed. Since Morrill had been the point of contact between the Mercenary Association and Eula's security forces, it was safe to assume that their intricate phase-one plans have been shared with other terrorists.

However, coming up with a new and safer plan in such a short time limit wasn't an easy thing to do. Especially since it took them more than a month to come up with the previous plan. The two designated strategists of the team were having a hard time coming up with any plans now.

"Why are you so dead set on using a private spaceship?" Ashton immediately pointed at the obvious source of problems.

"Look, I know you are strong and all, but let us do our job." Qamnol waved his hands gesturing for Ashton to leave them alone.

"Yeah, go punch a hole in someone's body or something, let the brainy people do their job." Kargon, the second half of the strategist duo chimed in.

Although they did not look like it, they were twins that belonged to the Altos race. Although the Altos lacked in the physical department and mainly looked like a weird hybrid between humans and fish, they were highly intelligent beings.

The three horns on top of their heads could be used for telepathic communication as well as other psychic abilities. However, they couldn't use their psychic abilities without causing insurmountable strain to their minds, that's why they rarely ever were seen working on the front lines. To summarise it all, the Altos were created to play a supportive role and nothing more.

[Haha, I never thought creatures having half of your intelligence would mock you.]

'Weird times... I guess. I can only hope they'll learn from their failures.'

Ashton shrugged and turned around to leave when Vimur walked up to Qamnol and Kargon and slapped them on their head. They immediately grabbed their heads and turned to face Vimur while giving him a mixed expression of pain and confusion.

"I guess it was true," Qamnol mumbled, "Apes strong together."

"Oi, walking mountain! Why did you slap us?" Kargon got up as if he was willing to exchange blows, but a moment later he remembered the size difference between the two and quite sat down, "May I know my error for which you ascertained your animalistic tendencies at our expense, oh great fat piece of poop?"

For a moment Vimur was confused about whether Kargon was showing him respect or not. Since high intelligence wasn't a gift given to everybody it took him some time to process what Kargon had said.

"Save your dying brain cells, he just called you a piece of shit." Ashton offered a helping hand to his fellow teammate.

"Is that so..." Vimur coldly mumbled while cracking his knuckles, "First, you disrespect Reaper and now me? Looks like I have been going easy on you bastards... time to correct that mistake."

"So you just slapped us because we disrespected him?" Qamnol asked in his squeaky voice, "Dude, you haven't even known him for a week and you're taking his side?"

"I might not be intelligent as you guys, but I know one thing, without Reaper this mission would have been a bust since the beginning." Vimur remarked, "Also, I don't remember either of you suspect that there could be terrorists hiding within lady Eula's security forces. Only Reaper did, so why don't you idiots listen to him once?"

The mermen stared at each other and nodded. It was true Reaper had already helped them a lot and listening to his opinion wouldn't harm them. If they like it, then well and good, and if they didn't like his suggestion, they could keep brainstorming as usual.

"Thank you." Ashton patted Vimur on the back before taking a seat among the mermen, "So, tell me one thing, why are you so dead set on having Eula on a private ship?"

"Isn't it obvious? A ship that's entirely under our control would be better in defending against intruders." Kargon pointed out, "You don't expect us to not fight when someone invades the ship, do you?"

"That's the part where you are wrong." Ashton shook his head, "Why are you assuming that we'll be invaded in the first place? Instead, you should be planning how to evade such a possibility entirely."

The mermen looked at each other. They were clearly confused, not knowing where Ashton was going with his questions. As for Vimur, the discussion was boring for him so he resorted to flexing his muscles instead.

"What if, we don't get invaded at all?" Ashton smiled, "I know a way to make it happen. But it'll only be possible if we use public transportation instead."

"What?"

"Hear me out. If you were terrorists hunting down a popular actress in space, where will you look for her, in a private spaceship or in a spaceship that's used by commoners?" Ashton asked the mermen and they finally got what he had been trying to say.

No terrorist would look for an actress like Eula in a spaceship filled with commoners. After all, Eula's self-isolating tendencies were quite well-known to the public. There was no way she would travel in a spaceship full of strangers.

"I get what you're saying, but there's an obvious problem." Qanmol mumbled while scratching one of his horns, "If a public spaceship takes off from the tower and the terrorists were keeping an eye on us, it would turn out to be difficult for us to make a run for it."

"That's why we'll have someone follow the plan you made before." Ashton got up and began pacing around the table, "Get a private ship and a public ship. Use the private ship as we were supposed to but secretly transport Eula inside the public spaceship."

He continued, "The terrorists would most likely follow the private spaceship which would buy us some time. In case they find out about the plan after attacking the private ship, it'll be too late for them to do anything drastic to us. As for the event they attacked us, we'll still be able to retaliate in kind. Problem solved."

Chapter 379 Public Transportation (2)

After going through the detailed plan once, Mazton approved it immediately. However, there was a small problem. They still needed to fool the terrorists into thinking that Eula was on the private spaceship and not anywhere else.

To do so, Ashton suggested that the Consorts should board the private ship. Judging by how the consorts always travelled by Eula's side, having them board the fake ship would be convincing enough for the terrorists to attack the private ship instead.

This is where the problem began. The consorts were not ready to separate themselves from their mistress. The moment Mazton inform them of the plan, they vehemently opposed it.

Considering they were his clients along with Eula, Mazton could only try and convince them. But they weren't budging from their stand and were adamant to accompany Eula no matter the cost.

While Ashton wanted the association to handle the official business, the morons were getting on his nerves because they were unnecessarily prolonging the trip. It wasn't acceptable because not only was he losing money, but the bastards were also endangering the Association and the well-being of his client as well.

The longer they waited there, the higher the risk of getting invaded got. Especially since Ashton took out Morrill who was serving as an information provider for the terrorists. His absence would soon be questioned and the terrorists could even launch a full-scale attack on the tower. Though the chances of doing something like that were slim.

Mazton was still trying to negotiate with the consorts when Ashton walked up to them and grabbed one of them by the collar. His hostile reaction shocked everyone there, but after seeing how easily he had managed to handle the terrorists, no one on Eula's side wanted to mess with him.

"Listen here, you high-class braindead shapeshifting piece of shit. I've had enough of you and your brothers or whatever you call them," Ashton pulled the consort's face awkwardly close to his, "I don't care why you have a problem with the plan we came up with, but what I do know is if it wasn't for your negligence and stupidity, we wouldn't be needing a second plan in the first place."

Ashton then let go of the Scalvi and continued, "If anyone has the right to be angry, it's us, the mercenaries. If you had done your job adequately, we wouldn't have been infiltrated in the first place and would most likely be on our way to Lady Eula's planet. So suck it up and rectify your mistake, rather than spouting nonsense and causing more troubles."

After saying his piece, Ashton backed away and continued scanning everyone through [Detection]. Although the way Ashton handled things wasn't anything Mazton would usually approve of, this time he made an exception because the consorts were unnecessarily making things difficult for them.

In case he wasn't representing the association, Mazton would have done something similar with the Scalvis.

"Lady Eula has already approved of the plan, so let's continue without any holdup," Mazton replied, "I'll get everything ready, and you should just stick to the plan."

The consorts silently nodded and left the chamber to prepare for departure. In the meantime, the tower contacted one of the nearby stations to call for a 'Space Taxi'. Luckily, one of the fastest ships they could provide was around the area and would reach there in a couple of hours.

Mazton personally contacted the captain of the ship known as 'The Endearing' and walked him through the plan. The captain wasn't given complete details for obvious reasons and was only informed they had valuable cargo that needed to be dispatched immediately.

Mazton's reputation played a strong part in convincing the captain, but finally, he agreed to take the cargo and 15 armed guards to protect the 'goods'.

It took a lot of convincing to allow the mercenaries to use weapons, as it was a well-known rule that anyone boarding a transportation ship has to surrender all weapons before boarding. As if that wasn't enough, everyone's access to the inventory was also restricted for the duration of the travel. But out of respect for Mazton, the captain allowed the mercenaries to carry weapons on them.

That being said, it would be suspicious if a spaceship suddenly appeared at the same time as Eula was about to depart. That's why Mazton instructed the captain to ask for permission for emergency refuelling of the ship on open channels and brush up his acting skills.

While acting, Mazton would decline the request citing they were taking care of something important. But after listening to the captain's plea for help, the tower would agree to their request and it was during this 'refuelling' session, that Eula and the mercenaries would secretly enter the ship.

Once all of this was set and done, the private ship would take off as planned and sometime later the public ship would take follow it from a safe distance. After observing the situation for a few days, the ship would then take a detour to drop them off on their destination planet.

This was the plan Ashton came up with. By no means did he or anyone expect it to be a smooth ride, but it was the best they could do given the situation.

As planned, The Endearing arrived at one of the ports and as soon as it docked, the consorts entered the private ship along with an Ena-bot disguised as Eula. While the public ship got refuelled, the consorts' ship took off at full speed to get as far away from the tower as quickly as possible.

Eula, on the other hand, was a bit... uneasy. Travelling like this, especially with strangers, was way out of her comfort zone. Thankfully, she did have five of her original bodyguards with her so it wasn't as bad.

"Here, take this."

While they were preparing to secretly board the ship, Ashton walked up to her and handed her a mask. However, it wasn't an ordinary mask. The silicone mask had an ability imbued in it, the ability to distort the user's face.

While it wouldn't give Eula a completely new face, it would be enough to make her unrecognisable. This was more than enough to keep her identity a secret.

"Thanks..." Eula mumbled and wore the mask before turning to face Ashton, "How do I look?"

"Unrecognisable." Ashton coldly replied before walking away.

"You're weird..." Eula mumbled thinking Ashton wouldn't hear her, but he did, thanks to his extra sensitive hearing.

"I get that a lot." Ashton uncharacteristically broke a smile, "Lay down comfortably, we'll be getting out of here shortly. Just hold on till then."

Watching Ashton smile made Eula return his smile, but the smile on her face disappeared just as quickly as it had appeared. It wasn't because anything bad happened, but because she realised it was the first time she genuinely smiled because of someone else.

It was a weird feeling, to say the least, especially because she couldn't recall a single instance when she was happy. But now that she was under the threat of losing her life at any moment, she was finally enjoying life... a normal life.

"Can I ask you something..." Eula muttered, "if you don't mind, that is."

"Shoot."

"I'm not the first succubus you have met, am I? One of my kind has imprinted on you, marking you as her property, well, not literal property but someone she cares about a lot."

"As I mercenary, I can't reveal the details of my personal life to a client," Ashton nonchalantly replied, "But you can say so. Now, lay down quietly, I'll come to fetch you when we are ready."

Chapter 380 The Endearing

"Hello, I'm Zoldur, captain of the Endearing. Welcome aboard, mercenaries." A man as pale as ash welcomed the team on his ship.

He looked suspiciously human-like and a few moments later, it was clear that the captain of the ship was indeed a human. At the same time, he wasn't a complete human. It would appear Zoldur had evolved from a human being to a species known as Meta-humans.

These people were quicker and on average had higher strength than compared to regular humans on earth. After spending more than a thousand years in space, it seemed the human race had divided into a variety of other races. Most prominent among the crowd were the Meta-humans, Sumeric Sapiens and Harvesters.

Unlike what the name suggested, the Harvesters weren't traditional farmers because instead of growing crops and selling them, they harvested aliens. In fact, they were the leaders when it came to the organ farming syndicate.

Obviously, Ashton did not know, nor did he care about them. But Zoldur recognised him and immediately asked which type of human he was. While Ashton had nothing to hide, he knew Zoldur might not react positively if he told him that he was the living reminder of the species that pushed the humans out of their home planet.

That's why Astaroth quickly gathered whatever information he could and suggested Ashton go with Sumeric Sapiens as the meta-humans often respected them.

"Ah, I never thought those god-preachers would ever join the mercenary association." Zoldur was quite surprised, "Either way, it's good to see a fellow human working their ass off. So, where is the cargo I was informed about?"

"Right here," Ashton replied while pointing at Eula who even with her disguise looked weirdly beautiful.

"Oh, I see..." Zoldur replied non-enthusiastically, "Well, I hope you enjoy your stay here and don't forget, your weapons are only to be used in self-defence. If you dare try to pull something sinister on my ship, human or not, I will throw you off. Is that clear?"

[Oh I would love to see you try. The bastard got the poorest evolution path one could possibly get and look at him bark! Makes me wonder what this fool would have done if he got hold of a half-decent evolutionary tree.]

Ashton did not convey any of Astaroth's comments to Zoldur and remained quiet. His job was done, now it was up to the rest of the team to show their usefulness.

Without wasting any time, the mermen brothers followed Zoldur to the cockpit of the ship. As strategists with little to no experience in fighting, it was the best place for them to protect themselves and continue working from there.

In the meantime, the tank and brawlers immediately decided to get drunk on board the ship. At the same time, the ladies along with Eula and her bodyguards left for the spa and some even went to get some food.

Ashton, on the other hand, decided to roam around and get himself familiar with the structure of the ship. To be honest, the ship was more like a 7-star hotel than a transportation facility. It had everything, from movie theatres to spas to dining halls and a couple of bars. They even had an armoury.

Sadly, only holograms of the weapons could be purchased there. After obtaining the hologram, once the ship docked at a scheduled stoppage, the travellers could visit the weaponry store affiliated with the ship and then get the weapon from there.

However, once they'd enter the ship, they would have to surrender the weapon and would be able to collect it while leaving the spaceship.

'It isn't like I could have afforded anything even if they gave us legit weapons inside the place.' Ashton saw the price tag on the items and excused himself. He didn't even possess the least amount needed to buy the most basic tier weapon.

[Hey, it's not like you need any weapons either. You got Balmond for your weapon and Hydra's armour to protect your butt. What else do you even need?]

'That's true.'

Ashton thought and kept walking around until he heard a commotion from the bar located around the corner. In an instant, a person was sent flying in his direction, Ashton immediately realised who it was.

"Laihud? What's going on here?" Ashton asked the shy healer of the team.

"T-Thank you for s-saving me, Master Reaper." Laihud breathed heavily before pointing at a well-built green-skinned alien, "There seems to be a misunderstanding. A woman, you know, a female of the other species, came onto me and when I didn't reciprocate her feelings since I don't swing that way, she called her brother to beat me up!"

Ashton couldn't believe what he was hearing. He had heard and seen a plethora of absurd things, but this was the first time he had heard something as pointless as Laihud was telling.

After that he looked at the female ogre standing in front, 'If she came onto me, even I would turn gay... just look at her. The precursors must have run out of ugliness potion after creating her. Even her brother looks better than her, to be honest.'

[So Ashton, tell me something, why are you gay?]

'Who says I'm gay?'

[You are gay.]

'...Joe is gay.'

[Joe who?]

'Joe Mama. Now shut the fuck up.'

[...]

Tearing his eyes away from the ogres, Ashton decided to ask for a clarification from Laihud himself. He wanted to get his facts correct before causing some unnecessary drama when they really shouldn't be trying to get attention on themselves.

"So you're telling me, you're gay and that lady decided to beat you up for it?"

"Yeah..."

Before Ashton could even laugh over the absurdity of the situation, the hulking giant walked up to them. It took a moment for the idiot to form a sentence but when he did, he spat more than he spoke.

"You... hurt sister's... feelings. Hulky will smash... you!"

"No need to smash anyone, green guy." Ashton decided to take a peaceful approach to the matter, "Let's talk it out like adults-"

Before Ashton could even complete his grand speech about peace and harmony, Hulky, the ogre, decided to punch him. Long story short, it did not end well for him. All of his fingers were broken instantly.

"That's why you should opt for peace when someone offers it," Ashton shook his head but didn't retaliate otherwise.

Moments later, bouncers approached them and dragged the uglies away and apologised for the inconvenience caused. Ashton just waved his hands to let them know it was fine.

"T-Thank you so much!" Laihud exclaimed and rushed in for a hug, but Ashton stopped him in his tracks.

"Sorry, but no homo. By the way, what are you even doing alone in the bar? Vimur was supposed to be with you, wasn't he?"

"He left to do something... or I should say... someone." Laihud replied, "He's in the washroom with the bartender. That Hulky moron was trying to get close to the bartender as well, but Vimur completely made a fool out of him. It was hilarious to see two idiots quarrel to prove who was the bigger idiot, but the girl ultimately chose Vimur."

"You assholes do realise we are not on a vacation here, don't you?" Ashton finally lost his cool.

"Yeah, but-"

"No buts! Get that idiot out and go protect the cargo, now!"