

Zompiewolf 381

Chapter 381 Raid (1)

Ashton wasn't even the leader of the group and yet he was having to behave like one. It almost felt like the rest of them had already forgotten about their duty. Galaxy's deadliest hunters were going crazy looking for them and these fools were enjoying themselves as if they are on a paid vacation.

Thankfully, he was able to knock some sense into them and soon they began to fulfil their duty as they should have from the beginning. A couple of days passed and nothing noteworthy happened on the ship. Which was a bit boring.

Since the captain was helping them so much, Ashton decided to help him out too, but for a price. His job was very simple, all he had to do was train some guards. While there were a few guards stationed here and there, none of them had any real fighting experience.

Since there were some mercenaries present on the ship, the captain asked them if they could teach a few things to the guards. While the rest declined his request saying they had their hands full with protecting the cargo, Ashton and Vimur accepted the request and took turns teaching them a few things. At the same time, Ashton learned a bit from Vimur as well.

Although he had defeated the man once, Ashton was surprised to see how good Vimur was at fighting. Even without having a cheat system and genes as Ashton did, Vimur's fighting technique was more refined than Ashton's. It was something only experience can teach you and not having a bunch of skills served on a platter.

The more they sparred to teach the guard, the more Ashton realised something. Had it not been for his Draconic physique, he would have had a bit more tough time than he did against Vimur. The man was literally half beast and half man, thus his tenacity didn't come off as a surprise.

"Damn... teaching newbies isn't an easy task at all." Vimur complained, "I thought it was a good way to make some quick cash. But I'm not so sure anymore."

"Don't worry, payday is just a day away." Ashton remarked, "We'll reach her planet by tomorrow and we'll flaunt money in the faces of the rest."

"Haha! That's why I like you. Either way, I'll head off to bed. In the meantime, try not to overwork yourself for money."

Ashton nodded and the two went their separate ways.

They had just returned from one of such teaching sessions. Vimur was tired and immediately retired to his room to get some sleep. Meanwhile, Ashton switched with Avvo and Laihud and kept guarding Eula's room.

After seeing his dedication to the mission, the fellow mercenaries couldn't help but get impressed. In the three days they had been on the ship, they hadn't seen Ashton take a break. Not even once.

He was always working. Either it was on guard duty for Eula or working around the ship helping the captain. Also, no one had ever seen him sleep and yet Ashton was working better than most of them.

All of them thought he was dedicated to his job. However, they were wrong. Although Ashton was working to ensure Eula's safety, he wasn't sacrificing his sleep for her. It was for the phantom. He didn't

want to risk sleeping and lose him in case he decided to appear. Which led him to worry about something...

Once Ashton was settled in front of Eula's room, he took out a communicator and contacted the Ena-bot in the private ship. It wasn't because he was missing them or something like that, but because the robot had not called in to report as she was supposed to which left a weird taste in Ashton's mouth.

Once again there was nothing. Ashton had reported the abnormality to the Mermen but they didn't seem phased by the situation. According to them, such communication gaps happened all the time in space. However, Ashton's intuition was yelling at him it was something much more than some communication gap.

"The twins didn't want me to, but I think I should report this to the Association just to keep a record-"

Suddenly he felt something coming his way and immediately rushed inside the room.

"Excuse me! I'm getting dressed-" Eula shouted at the top of her lungs, but Ashton cut her off.

"Get your mask, now!" He yelled back while throwing a robe on her, "We have to go."

"What's wrong?" Eula forgot about everything once she saw Ashton's panicked expression and began dressing up.

A moment later, she had her answer. The ship stopped abruptly and came to a halt. Soon the rest of the mercenaries were there as well. Outside, sirens were blaring and everyone was panicking. No one knew what was going on, but considering the alarm went off, it wasn't good news.

"Take care of her," Ashton said and rushed out of the room.

Avvo, Vimur and a few others stayed behind while the rest of them rushed behind him. A moment later, Ashton received a call from the captain and things were not looking good.

"What's wrong?"

"The Ship's lower deck has been breached." The captain calmly responded, "If that wasn't enough... we have been surrounded by two ships. One is right in front of us and the other one is directly below. I'm not sure, but I believe intruders have already boarded the ship from the lower deck."

"Damn it. Can you lock them out?" Tolgoi, the second tank of the team asked.

"I already did. But since the ship is just a commercial one, I'm afraid the locked doors would hold out against the invaders." The captain replied, "The guards are already on their way to check things out, but I wanted some of you to accompany them... just in case."

"We're on it. In the meantime, please inform the guests to stay inside their rooms." Ashton said, "Travelling around the corridors is dangerous at this time. If we find them loitering around, they might get injured by friendly fire. As we don't know who raided the ship, we'll have to view everyone suspiciously."

"Got it." The captain replied before disconnecting the call.

Ashton then called the strategists. Gathering information and coordination between the mercenaries was crucial at this time. While Ashton did get the information he was looking for, he also got to know something that immediately made him curse out loud.

Just as Ashton had predicted, his bait was successful and the private ship was able to lure the terrorists. But what he hadn't predicted was that the consorts were pathetic, weak-willed bastards.

Their ship was invaded and as soon as it was confirmed they lost the battle the bastards gave up everything they knew to the terrorists. How did Qamnol and Kargon know this was a bit suspicious, considering they had told Ashton just a couple of hours ago that they have had no contact with the other ship?

The more Ashton thought about it, the more suspicious their alibi got. For starters, the consorts had to be under Eula's influence and since he had gone through pretty much the same thing when Anna first became a succubus, he knew betraying their mistress wasn't something the consorts would be able to do.

This meant one of two things. Either Qamnol and Kargon were hiding something from him or there was a traitor on the other ship. Qamnol and Kargon were both chosen for the job by Mazton so it was unlikely they would betray the association.

'Now is not the time to think who betrayed whom. We have to get rid of the invaders first.'

[So what are you waiting for?]

'I don't know the way...'

[...then fucking ask someone already!]

'Right.'

Ashton grabbed one of the bartenders who was on her way to escape to her room. She vaguely pointed in the direction of the service elevator that would take them to the lower deck before running off.

The five of them rushed down and were immediately greeted by a series of locked doors. However, there was no sign of the guards that the Captain had mentioned.

"What the hell is going on here?" Tolgoi quietly mumbled.

Ashton immediately used [Perception] to scan the surroundings, but he didn't find anything noteworthy down there.

"Everyone, upstairs now!" he instructed the mercenaries but before they could do anything, the elevator crashed. Someone had deliberately trapped them down, "Damn it!"

Although there were five mercenaries and five bodyguards with Eula, Ashton had a feeling they wouldn't be enough. At this moment, Ashton had no doubt in his mind. There was a traitor in their midst. Someone who had managed to fool not only them but the entire mercenary association.

"How do we get back up there?" Tolgoi panicked, "There's nothing we can use to climb up either..."

"Listen up. You guys, blow this door up and keep pushing through and see if you can find the guards or not. If you can't, then claw your way out if necessary." Ashton instructed them.

"And what will you do?"

"I'm gonna fly up." As soon as he said that, gigantic wings sprouted from his back, surprising everyone there, "I'll hand the problems on top, you guys take care of the shit here."

Chapter 382 Raid (2)

"Just like I thought... the ship had been invaded," Ashton mumbled to himself, "Weirdly enough, it doesn't look like they forcefully broke in or something. Someone on the inside must be working with them."

They had just been on this floor a few minutes ago, but now the place was completely ransacked. The decorative pieces were kissing the ground while countless bottles from the bar were shattered all over the place.

It was obvious that some struggle had occurred there a few moments ago. But surprisingly enough, there were no traces of blood anywhere. Could there be a bloodless skirmish? Ashton did not think so.

[I think you are right. Even I think all this was preplanned more than anything else. You should head towards the captain's chamber and make sure everything is fine. Since he has control over the ship, it's obvious the terrorists would attack him first.]

"Yeah, but no before making sure Eula is fine. She is the client after all."

On a different part of the ship...

"Where is Avvo?" A human with a metal arm and prosthetic eye yelled at his crewmates, "Find her! She better pays off her loan this time or I swear I sell her off as a prostitute!"

The man was athletically built and had patched red skin all over his body. It was a rare mutation that was probably caused by the same radiation source that gave him his abilities. It had been a while since the man had given up his humanity in exchange for extraordinary power and strength.

With half of his body turned into a machine, he could no longer feel any pain. The last time he felt pain was when he was on the verge of dying. His 'comrades' abandoned him but his enemies didn't. The Metal Sharks saved him from the mouth of death.

They didn't have any noble intentions for doing so, they just wanted another prey for their scientists to conduct inhumane experiments on. Richard wasn't the only one who had undergone severe mutation enhancements, but he was one of the few that survived.

After the experiments were over, he willingly joined the terrorist organisation as a foot soldier, but over the years he became a small ship's captain. Despite being part of the organisation, he often conducted some jobs on his own to get more upgrades for the metal half of his body.

That's why when Avvo, someone who was in his debt, contacted him about a human seer, he came running. Finding a Seer in the galaxy was an extremely difficult task. They were always in demand and if he managed to capture the seer, he wouldn't have to work for the rest of his life. A seer would go for millions of Yenos if not more.

But even after looking everywhere on the ship, he was unable to find either Avvo or the so-called Seer.

"I can't find this Seer and the commander is pressuring me to look for a celebrity..." Richard growled, "How did he even know that Eula bitch on board this ship?"

"He didn't. It's just a guess since they couldn't find her on the ship they were supposed to." An Insect-like alien replied.

His appearance resembled that of a beetle walking on his hind legs and carrying a shit load of weapons in his arms.

"Whatever, find them! Look through every room if you have to, but get their butts here or I'll kick your butts instead!" Richard roared and his crew once again dispersed to look for the targets.

"Took you long enough." Suddenly Avvo walked out of a room and smiled at Richard, "Ever since that night, you don't even call me anymore. Was I a bit too rough on your little Johnathan?"

Richard's patchy face immediately turned red as he was reminded of the one night he wanted to forget the most. But the redness dissipated as soon as he saw Avvo smiling.

"Where is the seer and that bitch Eula?"

"Let me remind you, Eula is none of your concern." Avvo jabbed her finger in his chest, "As for the seer, I have trapped him in the lower floors. # Send your men below, take him and leave the ship. There were a few people with him so be careful. As for Eula, you can have her after this job is complete. Not before that."

"You don't make the rules here-"

Richard argued but went silent when Avvo showed two fingers to her. His buttocks clenched the moment he saw her fingers and didn't argue with her anymore. The more he talked to her, the more he remembered things he didn't want to.

'It's fine bitch... you want to play this game then go ahead.' Richard thought, 'The higher-ups already know about Eula and the entire armada will arrive here in a few hours. Then I'll see who plays with whose butt...'

Avvo winked at the man and was about to walk back to the hideout when from the corner of her eyes, she saw something coming toward her. She barely managed to dodge the attack, but she wasn't so lucky the next time.

"I should have known a bitch like you couldn't be trusted." Ashton mumbled coldly, "But don't worry, I'll let everyone know what you did when I'm done dealing with these fools. Till then, go to sleep."

Saying so, Ashton kicked her in the back of the head, knocking her out for good. Once she was down, he turned his attention toward the terrorists.

There were around forty of them, carrying a variety of weapons with them... weapons that could be sold for quite some money. Not to mention, after killing them, he would also be able to collect on their heads. All in all, it was going to be a profitable trade for him.

"Hm... not bad. This isn't bad at all..."

Ashton smiled and at the same time, Richard laughed as well.

"I don't know who you are kid, but you did a good job knocking that bitch out!" He said, "Now, seeing how you're alone and there are 47 of us, why don't you take us to the Eula bitch and the seer that's accompanying you? I promise to spare you life and give you a share of the proceedings-"

"Alone?" Ashton cut him off as a black portal appeared behind him, "Sorry to disappoint you, but I'm never alone..."

Chapter 383 Raid (3)

Meanwhile, someplace else...

The remaining mercenaries were packed inside a room. It wasn't the one where Ashton had left them, but another one that was located at a much lower level. The room they had previously been in was attacked by the terrorists.

But thankfully, it was a relatively small group so they managed to take care of them before the terrorists could realise what was going down. Sadly, it was also at that moment Avvo got separated from the group.

None of them knew how, but Avvo was captured by the retreating terrorists. As much as the rest of the mercenaries wanted to rush out and help her, saving Eula was their one and only goal. They couldn't do anything more than hope for the best and keep working on saving Eula.

After that, they found a much safer room and decide to hide there till they heard from Reaper. However, their luck ran out as they were soon found out again. The ship might have been big, but there were only a handful of places for them to hide.

"Tsk, they are onto our tails again." Vimur whispered, "I shouldn't say this, but it almost feels like someone is telling them where we are hiding."

The accusation did not sit well with the rest of them. But they knew there was some truth to his words. The places they were hiding weren't that easy to look for, still, the terrorists were effortlessly able to find them every time.

"We are running out of places to hide," Vimur whispered in the radio that connected him to the mermen, "I think those bastards are already onto us."

The others realised what he was up to and didn't contradict him. The strategists were the only ones Vimur had been informing about the places they had been to or the location they were about to leave for.

Surprisingly enough, 5 or 10 minutes later, suspicious people would show up around the spot they had been at. That happening once or twice could be chalked up to coincidence, but when the same shit began happening time and time again, it would be obvious there was something wrong going on.

There could be two reasons behind this. Either it was someone in their room feeding information to the terrorists, or it was one of the two strategists. Thankfully, it was easy to find out who it was.

Vimur continued speaking into the communicator, "We'll be escorting Eula to the floor below, right next to the stairs. The dark corner should be enough to hide her and a couple of others. In the meantime, the rest of us would act as decoys to keep them away from her."

After a long silence, he did what he had to. Little did he know, there was bigger trouble heading his way.

Back near the docking area...

Three creatures walked out of the portal, each unlike the one from before. One shared a resemblance with a four-armed giant ape, while the other was a ghastly beauty in her own right. It was the last creature that made the terrorists panic.

He was a humanoid creature, but he wasn't unlike any creature Richard had ever come across or heard about. But strangely enough, Richard wasn't interested in any of them. There was only one thing going on inside his head...

'A necromancer... how the hell did an undead bastard from earth end up here?'

Despite fighting amongst themselves in space, the humans had one enemy they would readily set their differences aside for. It was the mutants who took their home away from them. That being said, there were no known encounters with the mutants in space, then who was the one standing in front of him?

'He doesn't look like an undead either... but he has to be one since he is using the power of necromancy. Someone alive can't possibly tame the dead, no matter what...'

The more Richard thought about it, the weirder the situation became. But before he could think about it anymore, his crewmates began talking amongst themselves.

Not only were they talking, but they slowly began to back away from the necromancer. Nothing good will ever come out of messing with someone who had mastered death in the first place.

"Celeste, find Eula and make sure she is safe. But do not reveal yourself to anyone, is that clear?" Ashton instructed the seductress, "Gokung, make sure none of them can escape and as for you... Atlas, relax and learn how I do things. I can't have you rampaging through the spaceship."

The undead Xyran was a bit taken aback. Even after death, his craving to fight and kill was nowhere satisfied. Yet, his master wanted him to sit back and not fight. But, he had little control over his master's command so he decided to do as he was told and not fuck with someone as frightening as Ashton.

"You... how did you get here?" Richard finally spoke up, "My men are stationed all over the ship. They would have reported me the moment they saw you-"

"I'm sure they would have done so... if they saw me." Ashton coldly replied, "Even you should have known what happened to them, or are your eyes that weak they can't even see the obvious?"

It was only when Ashton mentioned it did Richard see it. He was too preoccupied with Ashton's and his summons sudden appearance he didn't notice the obvious bloodstains all over Ashton's clothes.

'He killed them all? All of them... how the hell is that even possible? This kid... he is something else.'

Ashton was no longer as reckless as he had been when he was on earth. Nor was he arrogant enough to blindly jump into a fight. He knew the terrorists were going to be quite strong, but he also knew these people were more like intergalactic thugs, more than anything.

Despite being part of a strong organisation, most of these people were at D-grade or below. Which made it easier for him to deal with them. Statistics seemed to back up his knowledge as well.

After all, despite having superpowers, it was rare to come across a being having B-grade or higher combat rating. So Ashton took the bet and decided to end them, before the ants ganged up, and became a nuisance to him.

But before Ashton could take care of Richard and his party, the ship trembled once again. Ashton instinctively looked outside the window and saw another ship had arrived there. Only this one was much bigger than the previous two...

'Damn it! There's more of them...'

Chapter 384 Silent Torturer (1)

Sparks flew off in every direction when Balmond and Richard's bionic arm clashed. The latter was pushed back a bit as a result of the impact, while Ashton continued his relentless attacks. When Richard first saw Ashton he knew the kid had to be something special. If not, he wouldn't have survived in the brutal space for so long.

Yet, he did not expect Ashton to fight such fiercely. After all, a necromancer's strength was in their summons. The necromancer always stayed behind while letting his minions do the dirty work. But this necromancer was different.

He did not stand back or idle around. Instead, he led the charge against Richard and his group of thugs. The terrorists fought back ferociously but in vain. The two monsters supporting Ashton completely overwhelmed them.

To make matter worse, none of their weapons was working against the shadowy creatures. A few of them dared to challenge them in hand-to-hand combat, thinking physical attacks would work against them. While their guess was correct, it only led to a quicker demise for them.

Getting close to the monsters was impossible and dealing with them while maintaining a safe distance was utterly useless. There was nothing they could do.

At the same time, their leader was completely getting thrashed around. While being a half-android gave Richard extraordinary power output to his skills, at the same time it made him use a lot of energy to execute those attacks in the first place.

In other words, Richard wasn't used to having long drawn-out battles as it would make the robotic half of his body completely useless. Somehow, the kid who he had seen for the first time in his life, was aware of his crucial weakness and wasted no time exploiting it.

"Look, kid... it's not late for you to give up now. Our reinforcements would arrive at any possible moment and when they do, you won't look half as pretty as you are now."

Richard tried distracting Ashton while his energy core slowly recharged and repaired some of the damage. There was nothing else he could do. At the rate he was being forced to use his skills, sooner or later his energy core would run out of the residual amount of energy that was necessary to keep half of his body in an operational state.

With that gone, he would literally be paralysed and at the mercy of his enemy. Richard did not even have to think about what would happen if he got captured.

If the kid wasn't a fool, he would cash in bounty over his head and that would be the end of him. Or he would kill him and then cash in the reward. No matter what, Richard could not afford to pay that price all because of a stupid brat that got in his way. Not when he hadn't even gotten his revenge over those Meta-humans that betrayed him.

Sadly for him, his background and reasons for becoming a terrorist were of no importance to Ashton. The only thing he cared about was getting rid of the bastard. Richard saw the coldness in Ashton's eyes and decided enough was enough.

"Fuck off you piece of shit!" He yelled, pulling all of his strength into a single attack and launching it towards Ashton.

He was all in, either this attack would knock Ashton unconscious, or he will be the one to die. Unfortunately, his attack wasn't even strong enough to push back Ashton who effortlessly blocked his punch.

"Honestly, I was hoping for more. But I guess you weren't as strong as I thought." Ashton responded before crushing Richard's bionic arm, "Well, it's not the first time I have been wrong about these things."

A moment later, Richard's arm was gone for good. He slumped down on his knees... tired and defeated. He turned around and saw his crew had been slaughtered, his upgrades were destroyed.

All in all, what was supposed to be an easy capture and escape mission, turned into a nightmare that took everything away from him. All of it, because of one stupid kid. Richard wanted to curse the bastard in front of him, he wanted to yell he wanted to do a lot of things, but now he was powerless to even move.

"Get it over with..." Richard mumbled.

Ashton did not respond, but the following moment something rolled next to his feet. From the corner of his eyes, he saw it was a severed head... of one of Eula's bodyguards. Then came another and another.

He immediately perked up. Someone was there but he didn't know who. His senses were working on overdrive. Ashton heard a faint noise which got louder and louder until he realised someone was clapping in some distance.

Ashton immediately turned around, only to see Gokung was on her feet while Atlas was trapped in a makeshift prison cell that was seemingly made out of light. These gigantic creatures were immobilised and he did not notice a single thing.

'How the hell all of this happened without me noticing?'

[I didn't notice anything either... use Perception and see if you find something weird.]

Ashton did that long before Astaroth instructed him to, but there was no one anywhere close to him. But there had to be someone behind these actions.

"Look harder, weird human." A voice echoed through the empty corridors, "We have been watching you in action for a while now. We liked what you were doing to that other human."

That's when a different voice accompanied the first, "We share some of your qualities and couldn't help but admire your way of dealing with those thugs. Not to mention, you made things quite easy for us by killing our rivals."

Suddenly the room Ashton had been standing in turned into nothingness. Everything was gone. Richard, Atlas, Gokung, the severed heads... everything disappeared as if they were made of ice that melted in an instant. Before Ashton could think or do anything, he was stabbed right in the chest.

"Welcome to the house of pain... child." Both voices mumbled as Ashton fell to his knees, soaked in his blood.

Chapter 385 Silent Torturer (2)

****Warning: Vivid depiction of pain, torture, gore and self-harm. Reader's discretion is advised.****

The next moment, Ashton opened his eyes he saw a familiar, yet long-forgotten sight. He looked around himself to make sure he wasn't wrong, and he wasn't.

"What am I doing here?" Ashton mumbled before slowly getting off his bed, "Why am I back in the enclosure? The last thing I remember-"

The moment he tried remembering what he had been doing before waking up, it felt his head would burst at any moment. The pain was immense, but he pushed through and remembered bits and pieces of memories. However, they almost felt like he was trying to remember a dream rather than some kind of past.

His head felt like it would burst if he thought about his past anymore. So, he decided to drop it for now. Once that was done, he walk over to the mirror to take a good look at himself. To his surprise, he couldn't see anything in the mirror. There was no reflection of him.

"What the hell!?" He shrieked and fell hard on his butt, "I must be hallucinating... that has to be it..."

,m He got up and sure enough, this time he could see himself in the mirror. Just to make sure he was right, he began making silly faces and random gestures in front of the mirror. His reflection copied his every move.

"Phew... I thought there was something wrong with me." he sighed in relief, "Now, what-"

"Huhuhu... HAHAHA!"

Suddenly the reflection in the mirror began laughing like a maniac, giving Ashton another jumpscare. The next moment, a dagger materialised in his hands and he began playing with it. Ashton was weirded out watching himself play with the dagger, but before he realised, the reflection stabbed his shoulder.

"Argh!"

Ashton cried in pain as his shoulder got soaked in blood, but his reflection was just as clean as it had been before. However, the dagger was covered in blood... his blood. Before Ashton could even contemplate what was happening, the reflection once again raised the dagger.

Ashton tried to stop the reflection, but how was he supposed to do it when he couldn't even touch his other half? The dagger came crashing down on his thigh and when through it, like a hot knife through butter.

But the reflection wasn't done yet. Rather than pulling out the dagger, the reflection dragged the knife up to his knee, slicing the thigh in half.

Ashton's legs gave out, and the reflection kept smiling at him like a true sadist. After that, the only thing that followed was pain... immense pain of being stabbed in every inch of his body. By the time the reflection was done... Ashton was laying in a pool of his blood, pain was the only thing in his mind.

Days passed, but the reflection didn't stop. Every day he would return and torment Ashton again while laughing his head off. Ashton would beg him to stop, but his reflection wouldn't listen.

Not a single drop of blood was left in his body, but the reflection kept stabbing him over and over again. Ashton wanted to die, yet for some reason, he wasn't dead... even though his organs had been destroyed, his eyes had been gauged out, his torso had been ripped open for insects to feed upon and yet... he was alive.

"Pain is eternal... Pain is absolute..." The reflection mumbled while juggling with Ashton's organs, "Pain is the name of living... break free from it... break free from the notion of life..."

Months passed, but the pain did not. His reflection did not let him die, but it didn't stop the pain either. Until... at one point Ashton stopped feeling pain altogether. The only thing inside his head was pain and death...

It was hell.

His reflection began slicing off his skin next, but he couldn't feel anything anymore. It had been a while since his body had gone numb. The laughing noise of the reflection was the only thing ringing in his head... even though, without his ears, he couldn't hear anymore.

Soon he was reduced to a skeleton, but he was still alive. For what reason, he did not know. But he was alive.

'Why... am I here... wouldn't it be better if I die? Yes... let's die... the pain will go away then.'

Suddenly he felt something being forced into his hands. Without his vision, he couldn't see what it was, but the moment he grasped his fingers around the thing, he instantly knew it was the dagger that his reflection had used to torment him.

"You want to die? Then kill yourself and be free from the curse of living." His voice echoed inside his head, "Kill yourself and there will be no despair. Kill yourself and there will be no suffering. Kill yourself and there'll be no pain."

At that moment instead of being sad and angered, Ashton was happy. How could he not be happy? He was generously being given a way out of the dreadful mess he was in. Only a fool would choose pain over the sweetness of an instantaneous release from life.

"End your... despair. End your... suffering. End your pain... end your life."

Ashton smiled while subconsciously raising the dagger. Finally, he could end his pain and be free from the curse of living. But before he could stab himself, someone kicked the dagger out of his hands.

Ashton lunged to grab the knife, but someone pulled him back. He didn't care who was stopping him, he just wanted to die. Why couldn't they let him die in peace? Why do they have to torment him? Why do they want him to live in such a cruel world?

"LET ME DIE!" Ashton yelled at the top of his lungs.

SLAP!

The slap brought him out of his manic state.

"Oi brat, you good now?"

Although the words were harsh, the tone of the voice was filled with warmth. It was the voice of someone who cared, someone who wasn't going to stab him with a dagger.

Ashton slowly looked up and saw a man with golden skin, jet black hair and gigantic white angelic wings standing in front of him. It was the first time Ashton had seen the man and yet he immediately knew who he was...

"Astaroth?"

Chapter 386 Lord Of Massacre (1)

"Nah, my name is Itsumi Mario... of course, it's me you fucking idiot." Astaroth scoffed with his arms crossed in front of his bare chest, "Mind telling me what the hell were you doing there?"

Ashton did not say anything. His gaze was tracing the green pastures around them. They weren't standing in his cell like before. The fields weren't cold, or full of misery and pain. It was warm... if heaven existed, it had to be this place... nothing else.

Ashton snapped back to the 'reality' and patted his body in every place, expecting to be in pain and his body filled with holes. But a pleasant breeze was the only thing he could feel as he finished checking his woundless body.

His eyes then landed on the Xyran once again. After seeing how full of beautiful features Beelzebub was, Ashton had more or less expected Astaroth to be quite good-looking as well. But Astaroth's handsomeness far exceeded his expectations.

From his black hair to his chiselled jaw, everything about him was perfect. Thanks to those gigantic wings on his back, he truly looked like an angel. Even the angry expression on his face gave Ashton a weird sort of peace.

"What's going on? Where are we?" Ashton finally spoke up, "Don't tell me we're dead... because this place looks a lot like how heaven would."

"You seriously expect to go to heaven? Bitch, we'll be lucky if hell accepts us." Astaroth sternly replied, "As for being dead, we're not. No thanks to you though. You were about to stab yourself to death, if I had not used Raphael to interrupt you then we'll probably be arguing in hell right now."

"What happened?"

"Psychic attack. One of the strongest I have ever seen. Even Xyrans would have a hard time evading it. So it's no surprise you got caught in the illusion." Astaroth stated, "As for where we are... it's my personal space, the place where I have been living all this time. A small home in your collective conscience. Beautiful, isn't it?"

Ashton silently nodded. The place was indeed beautiful, too beautiful for him to believe this place was somewhere inside his head. If anything, he had expected his mind to craft up a place of chaos as that was the only thing he had ever known.

"Ok, so you saved me from the attack. Then what am I still doing here?" Ashton asked.

"I didn't save you. I lack the means for it. I just stopped you from doing something you shouldn't have. To make you realise what you were living through was a made-up scenario that wasn't real." Astaroth corrected him, "Think of it as a break. The moment you go out of here, you'll end up in the same place you were before. But this time, you'll know it's all fake."

"I see... Thanks for saving my sorry ass." Ashton smiled and shook his head, "I still can't believe I was about to kill myself... after coming this far. I'm gonna teach those bastards a lesson for doing what they did to me-"

"Do you even know who they are?" Astaroth cut him off.

"..."

"Chak 'Mandai and Olk Yoga. The Siiglina aliens you read about in the report."

"Those 7'10 tall bastards with multiple jaws?"

Astaroth nodded, "I don't blame you if you're having a hard time stomaching it. After looking at their figure, even I would have thought they were warriors and not some sort of psychic mages, but it is what it is."

"So what do I do now?" Ashton looked around, "Mind giving me a hint?"

To this, Astaroth gave him his hand, wanting Ashton to grab onto it. Ashton took Astaroth's hand, thinking since he invited him to his domain, he would escort him out as well. Instead, Astaroth grabbed Ashton's hand with both of his arms and began swinging him like an axe.

The momentum lifted Ashton's feet off the ground and after reaching a certain escape velocity, Astaroth let go of him.

"Have a safe flight... and give them hell for me! YEET!"

I felt like an eternity had passed when Ashton finally woke up. He was back in his room... still soaked in his blood. The nightmare had begun all over again. But this time, Ashton remembered who he was and what was he capable of. No mere mental trick was going to mess him up again.

A dagger was in his hands, the same one he had been tormented with as his reflection kept mumbling the same thing over and over.

"End your... despair. End your... suffering. End your pain... end your life."

"Bitch, shut the fuck up." Ashton barked and sat back up straight.

For the first time since this nightmare began, his reflection was a bit taken aback. From the look on his face, it was clear Ashton was not supposed to be able to refuse him. But what Ashton did next shocked the bastard even more.

"Man, that confused expression on my face really makes me look ugly." Ashton made some weirdly fake puking sounds before stabbing the mirror with the knife, "Let's get rid of that ugly face, shall I?"

The mirror shattered the moment the knife touched it. The fake world around Ashton collapsed with the mirror as his consciousness returned to the real world. He felt a bit of pain and looked down to see something was off.

Ashton's chest had been punctured. Blood was gushing out of the wound like a broken faucet. Judging by the mess around him, he had been bleeding for some time now.

But the moment he regained consciousness, [Haemorrhage resistance], [Pain Resistance] and [Shock Resistance], all three of them simultaneously kicked in to protect him. The pain slowly faded away and took his calmness along with it.

Richard fell hard on his butt the moment Ashton was back. But he wasn't alone. In front of Ashton stood two huge aliens. Both of them were just as confused as a baby who had just taken birth.

Breaking out of their spell wasn't something a mid-grade being Ashton should have been able to accomplish. Yet the truth was in front of their eyes.

"Welcome to the house of pain, eh?" Ashton smiled through the pain, "What was your plan? You wanted me to die from cringing?"

There was no reply.

'A kind of skill on me which trapped my conscious in an alternate dimension or some shit. It's quite similar to Raphael's skill. But instead of teleporting attacking my physical body, this skill attacks mentally.'

Ashton thought to himself. Maybe the similarity of the skills was the reason Astaroth was able to help him out when Ashton needed him the most. Had it not been for Astaroth, he would have bitten the dust by now.

"You... how did you get out-"

Chak finally opened his disgusting jaws to ask, but Ashton grabbed the lower half of his half and cleanly ripped it apart. The black blood of the aliens mixed with his own. Chak covered his half-open mouth, unable to even yell properly.

Watching his comrade in pain, Olk Yoga drew his energy sword. But no sooner he did that than Ashton snapped his hand in half using [Disassociation].

"House of pain... that won't be enough for the likes of you. Let me show you a world of pain instead."

Ashton grabbed onto their necks and dragged them along with him to the secluded spot away from the surveillance cameras. But not before giving Richard a warning.

"Stay where you are, while I deal with these bastards. If you try to run... their world of pain would be nothing compared to what I'll do to you."

Chapter 387 Lord Of Massacre (2)

—

Vampire Skill: [Skill Absorption] activated. Attempting to absorb the skill [Cognitive Assassination] from the prey.

Required gene to learn the skill: Any gene from a Space Faring species.

Genes of a Transcendent species are present in the host's body. Proceeding with absorption.

Due to the high efficiency of [Skill Absorption], complete absorption happened, further upgrading the skill to suit the user.

As a result, the active skill [Cognitive Assassination (lvl 4)] has been turned into an active skill [Psychic Massacre (lvl 7)].

(Note: The user can view the skill effects of the new skill on the stats tab.)

—

"Thanks to being in space, I can earn a lot of powerful skills and make them even deadlier," Ashton mumbled while wiping the blood from his lips, "If only their blood would taste a bit better, it would be easier to swallow."

[... you really need to pay attention to what you say.]

"I'll... try to pay more attention."

[That aside, Psychic Massacre... it's the first time I have heard of this skill. You would probably want to use it. You know, just to check the effects.]

Ashton nodded.

Even after killing the aliens, he wasn't feeling well. Initially, he thought tormenting the aliens would give him some peace in his scarred mind. However, there was not an ounce of peace in his head even after plastering the two aliens on the walls around him.

True to his word, Ashton killed Chak 'Mandai and Olk Yoga in the most gruesome way possible. Their innards splattered all around the floor and the walls could attest to that. Hell, even he was covered in a blend of their blood, flesh and organs.

However, even in his hate-driven state, Ashton recognised the value of the assassins. After all, if they could fool him into almost killing himself, they were more than qualified enough to join his side.

He told them so and to nobody's surprise, both Chak 'Mandai and Olk Yoga, immediately accepted Ashton's deal... hoping to escape death.

Sadly, there was one crucial step Ashton would have to take to ensure their loyalty. It was pretty simple actually. After all, Sven, Celeste, and Atlas... all of them had to go through the same procedure... the universally famous procedure called death.

"How long are you going to stand in the shadows for?"

Ashton barked and a shadow soldier made from the remnants of both the aliens kneeled in front of them. Ashton did not resurrect both of them as he simply couldn't. The cooldown of the [Resurrection] skill was quite high and so he decided to do something weird.

Instead of resurrecting one of them, Ashton used [Disassociation] to preserve some part of both Chak 'Mandai and Olk Yoga, and combined them to resurrect both of them at the same time, but in a single vessel.

If his plan worked, he would have gained quite a strong follower. But in the event of failure, two perfectly resurrectable corpses would get ruined. It was a gamble, but it ultimately paid off and Ashton even learned two new skills in the process.

One of which was the evolved skill that the assassins used on him. The skills that were known as the [Psychic Massacre] and the last skill was the other half of the [Disassociation] skill... [Association].

As the name suggested, while the [Disassociation] skill can be used to disassociate or separate things from one another, the [Association] skill can be used to bring back to separate things together.

It was thanks to this skill that Ashton was able to create a single shadow soldier from two different people. Although the result was worth it, he had to keep a lot of things in his mind while carefully assembling the corpse.

—

>[Psychic Massacre]: This skill allows the user to temporarily throw their target into a pit of despair and control their actions to a certain extent. The skill can be cast as long as the target is within the user's line of sight. Also, once the skill has been cast, the target will suffer from hallucinations and would be completely unaware of their surrounding.

Creatures having admirably high resistance to psychic attacks can free themselves from this skill. However, the use of this skill comes at a cost.

Grade: Moderate (level 7)

Cooldown: 10 Minutes

Cost: 40 Intelligence points or 1000 mana will be consumed per use.

Can be used: 10 times a day

Condition to upgrade the skill: Use the skill and force a high-levelled target to kill at least people around them before the skill duration is over. Complete this feat 3 times for the skill to evolve.

—

Having taken care of things there, Ashton turned to his shadow assassin. That was the class of his new summon which suited the creature's appearance. However, Ashton was yet to give the shadow a name to make him completely submit to his will.

"Raven... it suits you," Ashton mumbled after thinking for a couple of seconds.

"Thank you, master. I shall live up to your expectations and be the messenger of your might-"

"Yeah, Yeah... for now, get inside [Valhalla]." Ashton cut him off, "I'm sure your comrades would be pleased to meet you and show you the ropes."

Raven bowed and left without a word. No sooner was he gone than Celeste's voice echoed in his head. Since Ashton was connected to his summons, they could contact him anytime without verbally speaking.

"Master, I have found five corpses here... but there's no sign of the lady you sent me to look for."

"I assume all of the corpses have a missing head?" Ashton asked to which Celeste replied in affirmative, "So her bodyguards are dead but not the mercenaries... weird."

Without wasting any more time, Ashton immediately contacted the mermen thinking they would know something. Instead, when they finally received the call, all Ashton could hear were the sounds of someone fighting.

"What's happening there?" He barked into the communicator.

"What do you think? We are under attack! The fucking terrorists couldn't find Eula and now they are attacking us to take control of the ship!" Qamnol screamed back, "The doors are holding them back for now, but I don't think they will for much longer. We need help right now!"

"... where's Eula?"

"Vimur and the rest of them were on floor B34. I'm not sure whether they are still there or not." Qamnoi replied while the captain tried his best to make an escape.

"Hold tight! I'll be there in a moment."

Chapter 388 Lord Of Massacre (3)

"AAAHHH!" Justin, the mage, cried in pain as one of the lions bit his leg.

Vimur saw the lion's attack and slashed at it, but the lion managed to retreat in time. No harm was done to it.

"Damn it! They're too fast!" Vimur cursed in frustration, "None of my attacks are working!"

Till now, Vimur had tried his best to defend against the intruders attacking them. However, much of it was in vain. Had his opponents been humanoids, he would have been able to handle them somehow, but against fast beasts, his attacks were as good as male Giholo rioting against feminism on their home planet.

'Damn it... things are not looking good.' Vimur bit his lips.

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

Eula was continuously shooting at the creatures, but the bullets seemed to have little effect. Her shots were only effective when the creatures were closer to them. The creatures understood it and maintained their distance from her from then on.

They stopped targeting her and focused on the others who were more vulnerable. That's how their mage got hurt. All of them tried contacting the rest of the team, however, the communication channel had been blocked by one of the enemies standing far behind the animals.

Out of the ten mercenaries and five guards they had on board, only two of them were with Vimur. Eula's bodyguards were already dead and the rest of the mercenaries had gone along with Ashton to take a look around the lower levels. Avvo was missing and the strategists... well, god knows what they were doing.

Out of the other two mercenaries, one was a mage and the other was Laihud, the team's healer. The mage was the first one to get attacked and hadn't recovered since. Laihud was trying his best to get the mage back up, but his wounds ran deeper than he thought they did.

All this time, Eula was standing behind them as three lion-like creatures began encircling them. Had they wanted to, they could have ended the farce by now. After all, only Vimur was trying to hold them off while the rest of them were rendered useless. However, the white-furred creatures seemed to be in the mood to play.

'Those bastards are quite cunning... Instead of sending people after us, they sent animals because Eula's charms won't work on them.' Vimur shook his head, 'If only these Nemean lions were a bit younger, I would have been able to handle them. But... I don't think anyone can handle three fully grown bastards on their own.'

"It's no use. Just give up already." A tall dark man barked from far away, "Hand the bitch over to us and I'll let you live... at least."

Vimur did not reply to the provocation and focused on keeping the lions at bay. The first and final line of defence between his enemies and Eula was himself. If something happened to him, the rest of them would soon follow him to the afterlife.

They were completely trapped. As they were hemmed in from one side by the white lion, while the other side was blocked off by the remaining two. One of them was injured thanks to Vimur's and Eula's continuous efforts. But the other two were unscathed.

The lion started circling them and began slowly moving in, meanwhile his uninjured partner flanked them. As for the injured lion, it was lying near the escape exit to prevent the prey from escaping. Vimur saw this as an opening... not for him, but for the rest.

"Laihud... listen carefully to what I'm about to say. There's a way we- you can retreat to safety." Vimur sighed and threw away his shield, "I'll take care of the injured pussycat. When you see the chance, make a break for it along with the lady. Once you're safe, contact the others. Is that clear?"

"...Yes." Laihud clenched his fists as a look of frustration dawned on his face. "The question is... will you be able to handle it alone?"

"Huh. I wouldn't be much of a mercenary if I can't put down an injured cat, now would I?" Vimur smiled, "You should think about how fast can you run from here."

They were moving towards the exit slowly... but then the unharmed lion charged at him. He held tightly to his sword, ready to strike, but to his surprise, the lion suddenly stopped.

Vimur got agitated and was about to charge at the lion when he heard a blood-curdling scream. He turned immediately towards the exit. The injured lion used the distraction to attack the mage once again.

The mage kept attacking the creature, as it bit into his shoulder. But it was all in vain, he could only scream in agony as he was dragged back and thrown out of the way. The rest of the lions kept biting and slashing their claws on the mage till he stopped moving. The mage was dead.

Laihud and Eula were in danger of getting attacked as well. But were able to jump away in time before the beast could attack them. But Laihud wasn't unscathed. The bastard lion dug its claws into his thigh. The wound wasn't deep so Laihud was able to heal himself easily.

He was enraged. He didn't know any offensive spell that would have worked against a Nemean lion, but he was ready to rip them apart with his hands.

But before he could, something landed right in front of him. It was Vimur. His armour was shattered into pieces by a single blow of the lion. The Lion was standing on top of his head and roared loudly.

"Take... her and... go!" Vimur shouted while grabbing onto the lion's jaw, "There's no time!"

Laihud heard him, but couldn't take a single step. He was in a state of shock. The entire squad of elite mercenaries were about to get wiped out like they were nothing? How could it happen to them?

In the end, Eula was the one who had to grab him and made a break for the exit, "Just hold on, we'll be back with reinforcements-"

The Lion was about to deal the final blow to Vimur when numerous wolf-like creatures rushed past Eula and started attacking the lions.

"Looks like I'm right on time. Damn... you people look like shit." Ashton turned his attention toward Vimur, "I thought you said you could handle any pussy in this galaxy? Why are you struggling against them then?"

[And you're some pussy-slayer right?]

'I have slain more than you at least.'

At this point, the man in the black suit interjected, "Who are you?"

"Let's see... you want the corny reply, the cheesy reply, the cool reply or no reply?" Ashton shrugged before grabbing the lion by its tail and throwing it at the man, "I'm not in the mood for chatting with you, so let's go with no reply."

Chapter 389 Shadow Assassin

Drexan, the leader of a mediocre but powerful faction with Metal Sharks, stood still as his prized pets were relentlessly attacked. When he received the reports of Eula's presence on a public tour ship, he praised his lucky stars.

It was supposed to be an easy job. All he needed to do was get in, grab the bitch and get out. Since next to no soldiers were stationed on board such ships, Drexan couldn't think of anything that would cause trouble. But alas! His job got complicated even after obtaining crucial intel from his 'informer'.

The four-eyelid alien frowned before turning towards his men. There was an easy way of solving problems. Kill everyone and be done with it.

"Forget about the rest," He howled while pointing at Ashton, "Kill that bastard first."

Ashton was strong enough to take on their attacks. However, his team wasn't. Even one bullet could severely injure them or worse... kill them right there. That's why even if Ashton wanted to dodge the attacks, he couldn't. But that did not mean he couldn't get someone else to take the blows from himself.

,m "Atlas, greet them in my stead, will you?" Ashton mumbled and turned around with little to no care about the terrorist's attacks.

The following moment, a towering creature lept out of his shadow and charged at the terrorists like a berserking giant. Drexan's lackeys immediately focused fire on Atlas, and even then, they were barely able to hold him back.

In the meantime, Ashton checked up on the survivors. Especially Eula. After all, he was responsible for her safety but not for the rest of them.

"Are you hurt somewhere?" He asked.

"No... you came before they could touch me." Eula weakly smiled, "But your teammates-"

"They are fine... probably." Ashton mumbled, completely ignoring the corpse of the mage and handed a mana potion to Laihud, "Charge up and heal this brute. I can't my shield dying on me like this."

Laihud was a bit taken aback by Ashton's words but did as he was told. Even though Laihud would patch him up, it would take a while before Vimur would be able to fight on his own.

"Atlas, get back and protect the lady."

"Not done yet-"

Atlas rarely got the opportunity to fight against strong opponents. That's why he wanted to have a bit more fun. But the moment he looked into Ashton's eyes, he quietly backed down.

Ashton called him back because there were a few things Ashton had to confirm. Since Atlas would have managed to get rid of the terrorists with ease, had he made up his mind, Ashton wanted to get some information out of the terrorists before disposing of them.

While his lackeys attacked Ashton, Drexan was busy contacting the other team. It was a rule of thumb for any terrorist or pirate operating in space to capture the commanding station of the ship they attack.

This way, even if they failed to accomplish their primary goals, they would have established control over the ship. Gaining control over the ship, meant they would have control over everyone on board the ship as well.

"Nixon, how much more time do you want to capture a defenceless captain, you useless fuck?" Drexan barked into the radio, "Nixon, do you copy?"

Drexan tried and tried, but all he could hear was static noise. No one was responding through the radio. While focusing on calling for the invading team, Drexan noticed the bastard mercenary smiling and knew it had something to do with the invading team.

[Damn... these terrorists sure act cocky. I wonder why my kind did not put them in their places. After all, the Xyrans I know could never tolerate pipsqueaks like him.]

Ashton's silence agreed with Astaroth's remarks. The terrorists weren't there for him, they were there for Eula. Defending someone while fighting wasn't Ashton's strong suit which could be attributed to his lack of experience in such situations.

If he focused on attacking the terrorists, there was the risk of letting a couple of them slip behind him. While he was busy fighting the others, the ones who slipped past could easily attack Eula. At least that would have been the case if Atlas wasn't there to back him up.

"I believe you comrades, as you call them, are taking some well-deserved rest," Ashton smirked, "At the same time, my teammates are already here."

As soon as he said that, all of the remaining mercenaries rushed inside the hall. Some of them were injured from fighting their way through, but none of them was dead and that's what mattered the most.

Right after resurrecting Raven, Ashton sent out the rest of his summons, with the exception of Atlas, to help on various battlefields. While Celeste headed down into the lower levels to help the mercenaries who were stuck there, Gokung rushed to protect the captain.

That was the reason why no one was replying to Drexan's call. All of them had already been disposed of. Now Drexan and his small party were the only ones remaining.

"You think you won... don't you kid?" Drexan smiled, "Sadly, considering how you blindly trust your mercenary friends, you still have a lot of growing up to do. Bring the girl over now!"

To everyone's surprise, Qamnol took out his knife and pressed it against Eula's throat. Everything made sense now. Qamnol was the reason the terrorists were able to so effortlessly locate Eula every time they tried to hide her. The bastard was providing them with crucial information all this time!

"I'm sorry, everyone. But they have captured my family... I had no other choice but to follow their orders." Qamnol mumbled while slowly walking toward Drexan, "My words might have lost their value, but I truly am sorry for this-"

Before Qamnol could finish repenting for his action, something lept out of his shadow and sliced him in half with a single blow. Raven was standing there as Qamnol's corpse fell apart in two halves.

"I might be immature, but I'm no fool, Drexan." Ashton chuckled, "I'll give you a tip for your next life, try not to make such obvious plans-"

A sudden announcement on the open radio channel stopped Ashton's words in their tracks.

"We are the Orion security force. Your ship is about to cross over to a restricted area. Please stop where you are and cooperate with us. If any ship tries to escape, they'll be shot down without any warning. Our officers are on their way to assist you."

Chapter 390 Planet Eva

Within moments after the announcement was made, the ship was surrounded by countless others. The terrorists had a panicked expression on their faces and tried to rush back to their ships, only to realise their ships were overrun by Orion Security Force or OSF officers.

Since the terrorists were foolish enough to brand themselves with tattoos, there was no way they'd not get recognised by the officers. Ashton and the rest of the mercenaries were also interrogated where Ashton willingly accepted that he had killed quite a few terrorists.

Rather than being pleased by his actions, the officers were quite disgusted. Especially after what Richard confessed to them. However, since Ashton was a mercenary affiliated with the biggest mercenary

network and was on duty, there was nothing they could do against him. He did what was necessary to ensure his client's safety.

All that coupled with Eula's and the captain's statements, the mercenaries got off easily, but Ashton was reprimanded a bit for his barbaric ways. However, all the warnings went in through one ear and out through the other.

At the same time, the private ship that had been captured by Metal Sharks was freed from their control and unlike what Qamnol had said previously, Eula's consorts weren't the ones to sell her out. It was all Qamnol's plan to cause as much chaos as he could to ensure Eula got captured.

In reality, it had been the other way around with Qamnol tipping the terrorists off about the change in plans. He had betrayed the mercenaries long before anyone could realise. Also, from the terrorists' confession, Qamnol was the one secretly providing the terrorists with information about Eula's whereabouts.

As for why or how OSF got there to help them, it was chalked up to be a coincidence. The captain admitted he wasn't sure the mercenaries would be able to handle them, so he blasted the radio for help. But thanks to Qamnol, the communication channels were blocked by the terrorists.

Even so, when the OSF fleet master noticed a silent cruiser making its way into their territory, he immediately took action thinking it was a terrorist group or someone illegal trying to get into the restricted zones. His suspicion wasn't correct, but he ended up saving hundreds of lives in the process.

As for Ashton, he wasn't interested in the logistics of how or why OSF 'saved' them. The only things he cared about were his client's safety and cashing in the bounties of all the terrorists he had killed. But he was a bit sour that he did not get to kill the rest of the terrorists, especially Drexan who would have had a high bounty on his head.

That's why the moment their ship landed on a nearby planet, Ashton immediately went to the local bounty collection office to get his money. These branches were spread throughout the galaxy, which helped mercenaries and warriors of any kind to get money as soon as they got their hands on a bounty.

The process of claiming a bounty was fairly easy. All one had to do was to present the person or the corpse of the person having a bounty over their heads or in most cases, a recognisable body part. Ashton did that, and after waiting for a couple of hours for verification, he ended up with quite a sum on himself.

<21,280 Yenos have been credited to your account. Total Balance: 24,280 Yenos.>

Ashton was pleased when he checked his account statement. With this money, he could even buy a small one-man cruiser for himself or rent a bigger one. But travelling around in space wasn't on his bucket list.

[Wise decision to save money. I'm proud of you.]

"Don't be. For all you know, I might end up spending it all in one go."

[It's a good thing I don't need you to feed me then...]

It took some time, but Ashton managed to find his way back to Eula's mansion. It was quite massive which made Ashton frown a bit. It wasn't because he found it to be wasteful to needlessly have such a

mansion. But because he knew it would be a pain to monitor the entire mansion to keep an eye out for potential assailants.

"It's gonna be such a pain..." He sighed, "I think I should ask for a bonus from Mazton. There's no way in hell this job was meant for the 10-man company."

[You mean a 7-personnel team.]

Ashton nodded. He had genuinely forgotten about Avvo's and Qamno's betrayal and about that mage's death. But now that he was reminded of them... he realised the rest of the team had been behaving distant from him ever since Raven chopped Qamno in half.

Maybe because they no longer trust him. After all, he chopped up one of them without a shred of hesitation the moment he betrayed them. The rest of them would have done something similar as well, but they would have at least given Qamno a chance to come clean.

Sadly, one thing Ashton hate more than the Xyrans was backstabbers. In hindsight, he was happy that Qamno betrayed them when he did. After all, Ashton got the opportunity to show everyone what would happen should they decide to betray him.

On the other hand, Qamno's betrayal also dealt quite a blow to the team's integrity. Also, Ashton was pretty sure Mazton would be getting grilled after not one but two of his selected people decided to betray the Association.

'Well, I do feel bad for him, but he should have been a bit more careful. Especially after what happened the last time.'

Ashton showed his mercenary card to the officers standing at the mansion gate and was allowed to enter. The mansion wasn't the only thing big, the planet known as Eva to the locals, was itself quite big. Roughly it was thrice the size of earth but everything else about it was the same as Ashton's homeworld.

The locals also resembled earthlings. Only they had four eyes instead of two along with a tail. In terms of technology, they were much more advanced than earth but that had a downside as well. There was little to no natural vegetation left on the planet. But the Evines were focused on making their world a better place, at least the continent Ashton was on seemed to be doing better.

"Hm... this place is not half bad." Ashton muttered, "Sadly, it's time to get back to work."