

## **Zompiewolf 491**

### Chapter 491 Cat Fight

In the dead of the cold night, an unexpected guest arrived on Ashton's doorstep. It also happened to be the night in Livan before Ashton left for Contingency to take care of the mess there.

Everything considered Ashton's request to meet wasn't something the lady could have overlooked. Especially considering how gloomy he had been in the last few days.

Things have been a bit turbulent around the region's lord in the last week. His temper had improved, but otherwise, it felt like Ashton wasn't himself.

Always being lost in his thoughts, being absentminded and most importantly, not focusing on his succubus were amongst Anna's list of complaints.

Anna had had the feeling ever since that night in Tartarus. After what happened to his father and then to Avalina, it wasn't a surprise he had distanced himself from everyone.

That's why it was unexpected when someone appeared to talk with him while everyone else was in a deep sleep.

"What are you doing here?" Anna asked Mera, who happened to be dressed below her 'status'.

"You should ask your boyfriend about that..." Mera whispered, "Now, if you don't mind, can I get inside? It's freezing out here!"

"I'm a werewolf too, you know? We don't feel cold, but... sure, come in." Anna replied before realising what Mera was wearing underneath her coat, "Next time you're feeling cold, try putting on something more than your lingerie..."

"Maybe your boyfriend shouldn't be calling over women in the dead of night." Mera replied, "But your point has been duly noted!"

Whether human or a mutant, a woman's intuition was always on high alert regarding her man. Anna was no exception to nature's rule either, and after seeing Mera in her loose clothes, her feminine urge to slap the bitch was at an all-time high.

Mera seemed to notice it as well. But instead of acting her age, she decided it was better to play with Anna.

"No need to get jealous, Ms Fiery beauty!" She mumbled, "I might have taken his first kiss, but you're the one who took his first time. The way I see it, you'll always have the upper hand on me!"

Anna's face turned red, partially due to anger and partly due to embarrassment. Having already decided to put Mera in her place, she was more than happy to act on her urges. Unfortunately, fate had a slightly different opinion.

"The way you talk is crude, considering-"

"Anna, don't tell me you're getting jealous of a granny?" Ashton arrived there in the nick of time, "A good-looking granny, but a granny nonetheless."

[I'd bang her!]

'So desperate to get rid of that v-card, eh?'

[...just sharing my opinion.]

'Good point, but didn't ask, don't care, and you'll be forever a virgin if you don't leave my body.'

[As if I'm the one stopping myself from leaving this shitty body of yours!]

'Good, because I'm going to solve that problem of yours.'

[Can't wait to get rid of me, eh?]

'You have no idea.'

Ashton had a precise reason behind his decision: his father's departing words. If he couldn't trust Astaroth, the sooner he got separated, the better it would be for him.

While Ashton was busy chatting with Astaroth, Anna tried her best not to laugh at Ashton's comment. Aside from that, she was quite pleased to see him returning to how he was before.

As for Mera, well, no woman in the existence of earth would take kindly such a comment. But at that moment, even she was happy for Ashton. After all, it had been days since Ashton seemed somewhat cheerful.

Maybe her decision to wear some lingerie wasn't wrong after all! Even though it didn't have the exact effect, she was hoping for.

'Oh well, I guess it's fine as long as he's happy.' Mera thought before parting her lips, "I guess you didn't call me to crack jokes at my expense?"

"As much as I would like to do that for the sake of old times, you're correct." Ashton replied after offering Mera a seat next to him, "Actually, I have a question for you."

"What is it?"

At this point, Anna was dying to know what was so crucial that Ashton had to call a bimbo bitch to their home at night when he could have used that time on her!

"Given proper tools and time, would you be able to create my clone or not?"

Ashton's question was followed by unsurprising silence. Neither of the women present there could make sense of his words. Why would he, of all people, want a clone of himself?

"Even with Avalina's help, it might not be possible. Not to mention the lack of resources-" Mera came up with a neutral answer, but Ashton wasn't going to leave it at that.

"So you're saying if you had the world's cutting-edge tech and resources at your disposal, you'd be able to do it, correct?"

"Yes, but without Avalina-"

"Alright, that should be enough." Ashton interrupted her, "That's all I wanted to know. Thanks for your help, and you can leave now."

Saying so, he left the living room while Anna and Mera were too stunned to do anything.

"Oi succubus, what have you been feeding him?" Mera eventually asked.

"Well, he enjoys eating me out, but I'm sure that's not why he's acting like that." Anna beamed as she replied as it was now Mera's turn to turn red.

"No wonder... he needs to change his diet now. Why don't you leave us alone and see if it works? You'd be surprised what a change of... scenery can do!"

Mera fired back before planting a kiss on Anna's cheeks, "Don't worry, little one, I'll never be able to steal him from you even if I tried with all my might. That said, I should leave before that brat puts my ass out, not that I'd mind that."

Mera took a final jab before hurrying away.

"That bitch!" Anna growled, "I might just hate her more than Ashton does!"

Chapter 492 Reclamation (1)

"Things don't look good, captain." Ricochet said solemnly, "The advance squad is nowhere to be seen."

"Maybe we should have brought Alina and the rest with us," Anna chimed in.

"It's fine. Besides, we needed someone to protect the city." Ashton replied.

According to Ricochet, he had sent a couple of people ahead to establish a new portal system outside Contingency so that Ashton and his forces could arrive there as quickly as possible.

However, what followed Ricochet's command was radio silence. The last piece of information he received was a week ago, and as per the plan, the teleporter should have been up and running by now.

But the plan did not become a reality, and everyone had to arrive there using other means, which took a lot of unnecessary time. That said, when they finally arrived at the supposed 'camp', nothing but barren land awaited them. It was as if the advance forces never managed to step foot there.

"Sven," Ashton whispered as the Death Baron crawled out of his shadow.

"My liege, your command?" Sven replied.

No words were exchanged amongst them, but Sven hurried off to execute Ashton's wishes. With a swing of his sword, he tore through space itself... at least, that's what it looked like to everyone else.

In reality, Sven only destroyed the camouflaging gear around the area. Once the device got damaged, the actual sight revealed itself—a view only the most formidable people could take unbothered by the carnage.

While most people winced away, Ashton took in the septic smell of blood as a chef would treat their creation. The smell of blood and the sight of flesh were a welcoming sight for him.

Had he been alone, his summons would be having a feast right now. Unfortunately, the dinner will have to wait.

[Camo device, huh? It looks like they evolved again.]

'I would have been surprised if that wasn't the case.'

"I hope that solves your question, Ricochet." Ashton murmured without glancing at anyone, "Gather the corpses and burn them. Unattended flesh would only attract more of those sickly bastards."

"On it!" Ricochet replied as his men got busy with the task.

"Nora, take the werewolves and establish a perimeter around the camp. Make sure no one gets in or out without my permission."

"Alright." Nora nonchalantly replied as Ashton turned towards Anna.

"Anna, help Celeste create a barrier around the camp for safety. Once all that is done, we'll--"

Unfortunately for them, it seemed the unintelligent undead had evolved into something different, just as Astaroth had mentioned. When Sven destroyed the camo device, it alerted the undead within Contingency, who immediately sent a unit to check things out.



But that wasn't all. With the undead came the corpification gas, and the black smoke was coming out of a new kind of undead which Ashton had never seen before.

Their appearance was similar to that of a massive bowling ball walking on two legs with smoke coming out of three holes located on their backs. Anna, who had witnessed the effect of the gas first-hand, subconsciously took a step back.

The usually fearless succubus was scared, and so were the rest. How could they not be? All of them had heard or seen the havoc the black smoke had caused so far.

Before Ashton could call Ricochet back, a commotion broke within his group. Some of the men had been infected with the gas. Ricochet managed to gather the ones who weren't and rushed back towards Ashton. Nora did the same, but even she had lost a tenth of her forces.

"Damn it!" Ricochet cursed, "We should have expected an ambush!"

"At least now we know what happened to the rest of them." Nora panted while pointing at the corpses, "What should we do now, 'captain'?"

The situation was outside Ashton's expectations, but it wasn't enough to make him panic. In fact, it was an opportunity for him. While the smoke was poison to everyone else, for Ashton, it was a blessing as it had the opposite effect on him and his summons.

"All of you, retreat."

It seemed everyone was waiting for Ashton's orders as no one questioned him once and ran as far as they could. Regardless of what kind of bucket list they had, becoming a living corpse was missing from it.

As soon as everyone was in the clear summoned his scythe and army of summons. First and foremost, the expellers had to die, or they'd keep expelling the gas, reaching his soldiers sooner or later.

The problem was the undead knew it as well. After all, every creature in the squad was protecting them.

"Should I just snipe them from here?"

[I would advise against that. Think of them as walking balloons; the moment a pin touches them, they'll likely explode, flinging the smoke in every direction.]

"So it'll do more harm than good," Ashton scratched his chin.

[Yes, that's why you have to-]

"Be next to them when they 'explode' and absorb the gas before it gets ejected."

[Smartass pulling words out of my mouth. Well, now that you know, why wait? Let's go!]

Ashton sped across the field straight into the undead with the scythe on his shoulder. His summons followed his example, deciding to trample on anyone in their way.

The sudden swarm took the undead by surprise. However, instead of fleeing, they stayed where they were, protecting the Expellers.

"Gokung!"

Since the undead had formed a barrier surrounding the Expellers, the only intelligent move was to somehow go beyond them. Fortunately, Ashton had a plan in his mind.

Without wasting a second, Gokung picked up her master in her arms before flinging him across the battlefield. The throw was as immaculate as the landing.

Before the undead could even turn their heads, there were two ear-splitting explosions. The so-called Expellers had been expelled to hell.

Furthermore, the explosion pushed back the remaining undead towards Ashton's summons. While Ashton made sure to absorb every single molecule of corpsification gas that he could, his summons had a field day with the undead.

The fight might be over, but the battle was just getting started.

## Chapter 493 Reclamation (2)

Once the chaos seemingly died down, the corpses of the fallen soldiers were given a makeshift burial. However, it was done more as a precaution against garnering unwanted attention than to let the dead rest in peace.

In the surrounding area, corpses of hordes of undead lay unchecked. Ashton, along with his summons had faced most of them alone, leaving some for the soldiers.

While most of them handled the undead with some effort, some had to be saved from even the weakest undead grunts. Being left unchecked was the best thing to happen to the undead as they rapidly evolved over the months.

That said, the performance of his soldiers was below expectations. If they entered Contingency as they were, they wouldn't survive for more than a minute.

[A minute? More like ten seconds! That too after you trained them to the bones!]

'Not all of them are useless.'

While everyone went around burning the undead corpses and burying the friendly ones, Ashton and Astaroth were in deep conversation. Judging from their tone, it didn't seem like Astaroth was happy with what he had seen.

[Have you heard of the adverts in Kernel tower? This gun shoots the target in the head 99.99% of the time. Sometimes it's the 0.01% that counts, and this is one of those times.]

As much as Ashton didn't want to agree with Astaroth, he couldn't ignore him either. Ultimately, he was correct. Excluding a handful of people, the rest of his force had become a burden.

Under normal circumstances, Ashton would have spared a few words to comfort everyone. But he wasn't like the kid he was before.

Having turned into a seasoned warrior, he realised every battle would have losses. After all, a great soldier had to be prepared to face death before lifting a weapon. If they were not prepared for death, they would fail as soldiers. It was as simple as that.

However, a dead soldier wasn't of any use to him. Well, technically, they were since he could use their corpse to feed his summons. But that wasn't the topic of discussion at the moment.

[You should stop sugarcoating your words. They died because they were weak and overconfident. If it hadn't been this fight, it'd have been some other. But one day, their cockiness would have caught up to them either way.]

'It's scary how our minds have a similar thought process these days.'

[Ha! I knew being around me would increase your brain cells.]

'I never said anything about more brain cells, though?'

[...you and your indirect taunts.]

'I could give it to you face to face if you wish.'

[Pass.]

\*\*\*

While Ashton stared at them, the soldiers were studying him as well. Their captain had changed ever since he returned from Nirvana. Only those closest to Ashton knew the exact reason for his sudden change. But some rumours weren't all that far from the truth.

Although everyone understood Ashton's sentiments on the matter, it was still difficult for them to adhere to his sudden tough mentality. In their eyes, the loss of their comrades was an unfortunate accident.

How were they supposed to know what kind of enemies they would face? After all, most of them were mercenaries, so intel about the mission and the target was usually handed over to them on a silver platter.

They would then use that information to formulate a plan and strike to achieve the desired result. They weren't used to rapidly adapting to changes in a mission. Especially changes that could lead to death.

But then again, Ricochet knew his men were reeking of overconfidence. Since they were Metahumans, they thought nothing on earth would defeat them or catch them off-guard. Well, their thinking paid off, as they were now six feet under, embracing foreign soil.

Suddenly, a couple of soldiers let go of their shovels as despair dawned upon them. They had been inches away from the black smoke that turned their allies into rabid zombies.

In other words, their trauma was similar to that of Anna's as they had witnessed what the carnage corpification gas could trigger. That, coupled with the thought of entering a city shrouded with deadly smoke, drove them into despair.

Ricochet rushed to knock some sense into their weak minds, but Ashton was quicker than him.

"Are you scared?" He mumbled, but the men couldn't open their mouths in fear.

"I asked, ARE YOU SCARED?" Ashton violently shook both of them, which seemed to snap them out of their pathetic state.

"H-How can we not be!" The man yelled at the top of his lungs, "Did you not see what that smoke did to-"  
"

Having received his answer, Ashton knocked both the men unconscious. Everyone who saw it was too dumbfounded to speak and stared at Ashton as if he was a ghost.

"Anyone else who is scared?"

No one dared to say a word.

"It's alright, even I'm scared of what lies behind those walls." Ashton continued, "Being scared of the unknown is only logical. If you're not, then you have to be a psychopath.

"However, if you let that fear to wrap you around its finger, then you're already dead. Being six feet under or six feet above the ground won't matter if you lack the zeal to live. Unlike these two."

Ashton continued, "I have decided I'll enter the city alone. It's something I have to do with or without your help. But the rest of you still have a job to do. Man the exits and ensure not one of those bastards gets out of here alive.

"The loss of your comrades angers you, correct? Then have the guts to avenge them, and don't cry like these fools. If you think it's too tough for you, run because the Reaper doesn't take prisoners, let it be friends or foes."

Having said his piece of mind, Ashton left the team to decide their fate. As much as he cared about them, he couldn't care less about their decision because the thought of revenge had clouded his mind.

Chapter 494 Reclamation (3)



While Ashton was planning to invade the city alone, a black figure awaited his return. Ashton's little battle with the undead had not gone unnoticed.

"How many days has it been since I last saw you," The figure snarled, revealing his rotten teeth, "Do not disappoint me, Ashton Fenrir."

However, the man wasn't alone. Surrounding him were the deadliest mutated beings that had been turned into undead footsoldiers to do the man's bidding.

If all of them stayed together, even if Ashton managed to reach them, he would only meet his end. But where was the fun in that?

Being the only sentient being in the city was quite bland. So much so that the man was planning on invading kingdoms under vampire rule just for the sake of it. Fortunately enough, a source of entertainment had come knocking on his door.

Killing Ashton wasn't a difficult task. However, the man, also known as King, wasn't going to cut his entertainment short.

"Spread out, and find his companions." He barked, "As for the wolf, feel free to toy with him as much as you want but make sure he reaches me alive. Torturing his loved ones right before his eyes... just the thought gives me chills!"

The undead creature acknowledged King's words with nods before rushing to fulfil his wishes. They were weak in their previous lives, but King gave them an unimaginable power to rule over the city they once lived in.

Blinded by King's greatness, his soldiers lived for him and his entertainment, and now that an opportunity to repay their beloved King had appeared, they weren't going to sit idly.

"Huhu, don't disappoint me, my children..."

\*\*\*

Entering Contingency was more challenging than Ashton had hoped. Not only had the undead consumed local fauna into their ranks, but it also seemed someone had helped them gain technology that should have been out of their reach.

Ashton immediately knew it had to be those bastards from Nirvana. Thinking about them made his blood boil, but it wasn't the time to let his emotions take over.

"So much for not being involved." Ashton murmured, "If someone told my 15-year-old self I'd be fighting space zombies in a few years, I'd have kicked their balls."

[What if they didn't have balls?]

"You don't have them, but I still kick them, don't I?"

[...ignore balls, just tell me how you plan to handle them?]

"Wouldn't it be better to show you instead?"

With that, Ashton snapped his fingers, and within seconds, all the undead in front of him returned to the world of the dead. A moment later, Raven and his unit of Assassin skeletons appeared by his side.

It had been a while since Raven got a unit of his own, much like Skeleton knight and Skeleton mages under Sven's and Celeste's command. But it was the first time they were allowed to show the fruits of their rigorous training.

Ashton patted Raven's back to acknowledge his efforts, "You have coloured me impressed, Raven. Good work training these runts into useful additions to our forces."

"I'm not competent enough to receive your praises, my lord," Raven replied, his eyes focused on the ground.

Having left Celeste, Dolos and Gokung behind to guard Anna and the rest, Raven was Ashton's only option for getting inside the city unnoticed. However, selectively assassinating took more time than Ashton wanted to spend handling a trivial matter.

"How comes the difficult part," He mumbled, but before he could finish speaking his mind, [Perception] notified him about the hostile presence around him.

Raven immediately instructed the skeletons to strike. Unfortunately, they were too slow. The enemy descended upon them like heavenly fire; before they knew it, the skeletons had turned to dust.

A similar fate followed Raven as he only managed to take down half a dozen mutants before getting destroyed. The undead soldiers proved to be more formidable than Ashton had anticipated.

Everything happened so quickly Ashton was thrown off-guard. But what followed next was equally strange. Despite his attempts to fight back, the undead slowly overwhelmed him.

It took one minute for the undead to force Ashton onto his knees. A feat no one had achieved in a long time. The undead was attacking him, but strangely enough, none of their attacks was aimed at being deadly.

The aim behind their attacks was as straightforward as it could have been. The undead wanted to capture him, and the question was... why?

It was for that reason Ashton did not fight back and allowed the undead to capture him. Ultimately, being hit by the undead wasn't dealing much damage to him, so he saw no harm in getting 'captured' by them.

Not to mention, it was the easiest way inside the city. And if he got lucky, he could also come face to face with the one pulling strings from the safety of anonymity.

However, if things got out of hand, Ashton could readily summon Sven and Atlas for help. But before that, he could use [Corpse Parade] to take over the strings and get rid of the undead.

In the end, As long as he was careful, the undead were only planning their funeral.

[You and your masochistic tendencies. When will you grow up and stop putting yourself in these situations?]

'Think about the bright side! If I die, you might be able to control my body! What else could you possibly want more than this?'

[Now that you put it like that... Hm... it's not a bad deal at all! I'll get your body and a hot girlfriend-]

'Hey, you want me to kill you now? If I hear about it ever again, I'll get you a body and then kill you myself. Is that clear?'

[Damn, chill out! I was joking~]

'I know, I was just messing with you till these brutes carry me to their boss.'

While he was chatting with Astaroth, one of the undead hit him in the head with a heavy object. Realising their intention, Ashton immediately fell to the ground, 'unconscious'.

## Chapter 495 Reclamation (4)

After a few minutes had passed, Ashton decided to peek around as his body kept dangling like a ragdoll on the undead's shoulder. The city he remembered had changed a lot.

'Just broken buildings and abandoned roads. It looks like I'll have to wait till we move further ahead...'  
Ashton thought, 'Judging from the tech they were brandishing, I was expecting a bit more.'

Waiting was the only choice Ashton had. But no matter how far they went, all he could see were old, abandoned, and rundown buildings on the verge of collapsing.

Apart from that, he also noticed damaged cars buried deep under patches of some strange gooey substance. Soon the gooey liquid could be seen covering everything in sight.

But there was something even more weird going on. After a few moments, Ashton saw beautifully maintained trees and plants running around the path the undead were following. It felt strange that this area had trees and vegetation, unlike the other parts of the city he had seen.

[How the heck are these plants even alive under these conditions?]

'I was hoping you'd tell me. That aside, there's something familiar about these trees. Though I can't quite put my finger on it...'

[A garden... why would someone make a garden in the centre of a graveyard? I never took these dead bastards as environmentalists.]

'That might not be the case after all.' Ashton replied as he found a reason why there were so many trees around the area.

The undead momentarily halted in front of a relatively well-maintained building. Inside the building were humans... the place was a meat farm for the undead.

Hence there were trees to provide oxygen and barely living conditions for the humans so that the undead didn't have to resort to consuming rotting food.

Dozens of questions erupted in Ashton's mind. First and foremost was why the Corpsification gas wasn't working on the humans? The trees could handle the pollution, but he highly doubted they could have eliminated the gas.

Before Ashton could find the reason behind it, the undead were on the move again.

The network of roads leading to the city's centre was now indistinguishable from the surrounding landscape. Fallen trees blocked some of the paths while others continued to grow, their branches no longer prevented from growing into broken houses.

Some doorways seemed in relatively decent condition, while others were destroyed and indistinguishable from other collapsed walls and piles of rubble.

Many roofs had collapsed and, in some cases, had taken the entire building with them. Other buildings looked in crappy shape and were filled with dirt.

It didn't seem a long time had passed since Ashton first arrived in Contingency as Mera's pet and the Academy's student. But now, everything was different, yet it felt similar.

Once, it had been a growing town on the rise to a better future, but now, it was just a ghostly shell of its former self.

An eerie silence had taken over and was only interrupted by the cracking of wood in the wind and the occasional monster cries which had made their home under one of the many collapsed roofs. Nature had taken its toll on the vast majority of the town.

But even though many buildings had found a new purpose, there was no way this town's former self could ever be restored, even if the undead were gone for good. It wasn't worth the effort.

Hopefully, if Ashton's plan goes well, the werewolves will not need to try and repopulate the city.

As they moved forward, a familiar building greeted Ashton. The newly constructed academy building was where werewolves and vampires were about to study together. But before any of that could happen, the undead bastards took it all away from them.

The undead surrounding the building were different from the rest. Although Ashton wasn't sure, they seemed to possess intelligence comparable to the vampires.



Next to the building was a hangar filled with vehicles for transportation.

'No wonder they were able to spread so fast. After the portals were shut down, no one would have expected them to use vehicles instead.'

[As I said before, be it humans or mutants, they consistently overestimate themselves.]

'Probably something we inherited from the Precursors.'

After walking for a few more minutes, the undead finally halted. Ashton still appeared to be unconscious as everyone entered the 'palace' as it was referred to now.

No words were exchanged, but the undead were somehow communicating with each other. A moment later, the undead grabbed Ashton by the hair and slammed him onto the ground before walking away.

Ashton acted as if he had regained consciousness due to the sudden shock caused by being thrown on the floor. However, when he attempted to get up, he was promptly kicked in the face by one of the residents of the Palace.

Ashton looked up and saw a familiar face. How could he not recognise the potion master from his academy days?

"Professor Kakaroff..." Ashton mumbled, but the professor was no longer there. The man before him was just a shell, a vessel, nothing more.

Ashton didn't know why, but seeing him like that almost made him lash out. Thankfully, the sensible part of his mind calmed him down. It wasn't time to rain hell on them yet.

While his head was forced to the ground, Ashton heard footsteps racing towards him. He slightly raised his head to see everyone at his welcome party. Nothing in the entire universe could have prepared him for the surprise he was about to receive.

"Take your hands off him. I want to see his face." The leader smiled, "Your hair has grown quite a bit. Your physique and face have also changed, but those eyes are still the same. Full of anger and chaos."

It was only right to greet royalty as per the customs, even though they were dead. Especially since the one standing before him once ruled over Lycania...

"I wished I could say the same for you, your highness." Ashton sarcastically remarked, "King Bismark."

Chapter 496 Reclamation (5)

Bismark was thought to have died while protecting the capital. But Ashton always had his doubts. First, he wasn't a weak opponent that someone would manage to take down so easily.

From his experience, Ashton knew it would take more than a few D-rank undead to kill Bismark. Which led Ashton to believe either the king had abandoned his kingdom or he had been kidnapped.

That's why when Ashton saw the Undead Bismark standing before him, the surprise only lasted for a moment.

"Huh, you remember me?" Bismark smiled, showing off his rotten tongue, "Ad here I thought everybody had forgotten about me since none of you bastards bothered looking for me-"

"Look for you?" Ashton laughed, "Well, sorry to disappoint you, but we were quite preoccupied fighting for our lives."

The undead once again tried to smash Ashton's head to the floor, but this time he couldn't even make him budge. Our hero didn't see any point in hiding his strength anymore.

Despite the amount of undead piling on him, Ashton got back to his feet with minimal effort. The undead were surprised, but Bismark wasn't and knew Ashton had been acting since the beginning.

After all, Bismark trusted Mera wouldn't have raised a weakling by her side, as she was too canny for that. However, he was unaware of the extent Ashton had grown.

The scrawny kid Bismark had seen years ago had grown to be quite a warrior. As for Bismark, there was something wrong with him.

"Don't you want to know how I ended up like this-"

Bismark mumbled, trying to buy time for his lackeys to capture the rest of Ashton's team. After all, facing Ashton head-on would be foolish as he was much stronger than the last time they crossed swords.

"Sorry, but I'm not interested in a dead person's monologue." Ashton immediately cut him off before summoning Balmond to chop the elite undead to pieces.

As rotten blood splattered around them, Ashton grabbed Bismark by the neck and lifted him off the ground.

"Though, I could guess why you abandoned your... 'humanity'. You wanted revenge on Lycanians for 'abandoning' you in your twisted sense of justice.

"You almost succeeded in that as well," Ashton continued, "But thankfully, I returned in time to save the people I care about."

"Return?" Bismark questioned.

"You think I got this strong by remaining on Earth?" Ashton scoffed, "I might be a tribrid, but there are limitations even I can't cross without cheating."

Ashton's words confused Bismark. Bismark's only knowledge about outworlders came from what he had overheard during his days in Nirvana.

That said, he couldn't have possibly known about Ashton's battle with the Xyrans and his journey into space. When Bismark realised the meaning behind Ashton's words, he knew fighting him was a mistake.

No one on the damned backward planet could defeat someone like Ashton. Not only was he genetically gifted, but he was superior to everyone else in ways unimaginable by earthlings.

"Tsk... to think I'm weak even after selling my soul to the demon," Bismark sighed in defeat, "Go ahead, do what you have to. It's not like I could stop you either way."

Bismark meant every word he said, but deep down, he was wasting time. Enough time for his minions to return with the hostages. Only then would he have a chance of defeating Ashton and taking over his body as he had intended before 'dying'.

"For a king, you're not a good actor." Ashton shook his head, "Buying time? Do you think something like that would work? Or do you think so little of me to leave my team unattended?"

Just then, there was a loud bang in the distance. A flaming figure could be seen flying in the sky, shooting flames below. Much like Ashton was connected to his summons, Bismark shared a part of his mind with his soldiers.

Within moments he knew what was happening there, and he didn't like it. His 'elites' were superior to resident earthlings, not the guests from space. It was also that moment when he realised Ashton had played him.

'No, it can't be possible! My soldiers-'

"Thinking about how your soldiers defeated Raven?" Ashton replied as his lips curled to reveal his smile, "I can stage my capture, but I can't fake my subordinate's defeat?"

The look of cluelessness on Bismark's face was quite amusing. Bismark wasn't used to people outsmarting him, but recently, defeat was all he had known.

"Entering the city through conventional battle tactics was a waste of time, not to mention the time it would take me to find you. But thanks to your overconfidence, my job was made easier. So thank you for that."

It was Bismark's fault for thinking he could have won the battle through cheap tricks. But now that he knew he wouldn't win, there was no point in flailing his hands around.

Now that he thought about it, why was he helping those Niravanese bastards? For justice? For revenge? If that is the case, shouldn't he be taking vengeance on those undead bastards instead?

"Now, since distractions have been taken care of, should we discuss business?" Ashton surprisingly offered his hand to the fallen king.

Even Bismark looked a bit taken aback by the strangeness of the situation. One moment, Ashton was set to kill him, and the next, he offered him his hand? What was going on inside the kid's head?

\*\*\*

A few moments ago, Ashton was about to kill Bismark for the sake of it. But Astaroth had some other idea.

[Killing him would be a waste!]

'What do you mean? I can't raise an undead as my summon-'

[Not that! The other thing!]

'You're serious? Him of all people?'

[Could there be a better candidate than someone who abandoned his soul for the sake of power? I don't know about you, but he fills the criteria. Just think about it!]

\*\*\*

Back to the present...

"Business? What business?" Bismark asked, confused about Ashton's strange proposition.

"I'll grant you the strength you crave... in exchange for your loyalty." Ashton replied, handing him a strange-looking potion, "So tell me, what do you think about becoming a lich?"

Chapter 497 Horde? Nah, An Army!

"A Lich?" Bismark mumbled.

"A kind of undead being with the power to control other undead-" Ashton began explaining in simple terms, momentarily forgetting about Bismark's age.

"I know what a lich is," Bismark sighed while rubbing his chin.

Before turning into an undead, he had lived on earth for more than a century. Only someone witless would think he wouldn't know what a lich was. Nevertheless, he suspected Ashton was simply trying to annoy him.

Bismark was shocked because, despite his ample age, he had never heard of someone raising a lich. Usually, there were only two ways by which a lich would appear. Either an undead was born as one, or they accidentally evolved into one.

However, even the mentioned conditions were natural, and even the undead from Nirvana had had no success in artificially creating a lich. Yet Ashton boldly claimed he could turn him, an impure undead, into a lich?



Bismark was quite sceptical of Ashton's offer, and rightfully so. Nonetheless, Ashton couldn't be judged based on the conventional rules of the world, and logical thinking or analysis didn't apply to him.

"Can you really do that?"

Ashton nodded, "I can. In fact, I can do it right here and now if you want to, of course. No pressure."

However, since Bismark was hesitant, Ashton decided to egg him on. Thankfully, he had just the skill he needed in these times.

<Skill: Coercion has been activated.>

"Let me help you make an informed decision for old times' sake." Ashton mumbled, "You want revenge on the undead, just like I do. Our goals align, but unfortunately, our strengths do not. I will take my revenge on them, and it wouldn't matter to me whether you're with me or not."

"That said, I know you hate them just as much as I do, if not more. Those bastards took everything away from you. Your kingdom, your honour, your family... everything and then, as if wanting to rub salt on your wounds, they turned you into one of them."

Bismark kept staring at the sky, and his fists curled up tightly as anger clouded his mind. Ashton's words were slowly reminding him of the grand life he once had. A life that was snatched away from him.

However, it was only the beginning. Ashton wasn't planning on abandoning the fire he had created within Bismark's 'heart'.

"Anger is like the flame in a forge," Ashton remarked while carefully analysing Bismark's behaviour, "However, no matter how intense the flame is, it won't forge a weapon by itself. For that, you'd need metal and a blacksmith.

I can offer you both of those. As long as you become my lich, you'll have a solid weapon to erase those undead freaks from existence! Abandon yourself and be reborn under my command!"

"I'll... do it." Bismark replied, kneeling before Ashton, "I'll be your pawn, your slave, whatever you want as long as I can get my revenge. My life is your's to play with."

As Ashton heard those words, he couldn't hide his crooked smile anymore. The next moment, Astaroth confirmed Bismark's eligibility to turn into a lich.

[Got a guide for you. No need to thank me for it. After all, by helping you, i'm helping myself!]

—

How to raise your lich 101:

Step one: Find a power-hungry, soulless bastard.

Step two: Make them drink the carefully crafted transformation potion.

Step three: Kick back and relax.

—

'...'

[What?]

'Your 'guide' only consists of the information I already knew?'

[...yes.]

'Why am I not surprised?'

\*\*\*

Back in the outskirts, the battle was finally dying down. However, it wasn't a perfect win for the Ghosts. Roughly half of them got wiped out, even though Anna, Ricochet and Nora did their best to reduce the losses.

Despite being drenched in the disgusting blood of the undead, Anna's beauty was still untouched. However, her expressions weren't at ease. She knew Ashton's strength better than everyone else.

Yet at that moment, she couldn't help but feel worried for Ashton's safety. The undead they faced were no joke.

"Don't worry about your man, princess." Nora smacked Anna's back before joining her for sightseeing, "I bet had he been here instead of us, these undead bastards would've died the moment they stepped out of the city."

"I know. But thanks for uplifting my spirits." Anna replied before suddenly strangling Nora, "However, it would be better for you if you kept your hands away from me."

"Kinky!" Nora bit her lips as if she had no intention of struggling against Anna.

Meanwhile, the rest of them were busy disposing of the corpses. But the moment the catfight broke out, they said, "hell with the undead". Only a madman would miss such a sight.

However, their fun was interrupted when Anna saw some strange movement within the city. Immediately letting go of Nora, she stood up to ensure her eyes weren't playing tricks on her.

Unfortunately, her eyes weren't lying. Thousands upon thousands of creatures could be seen rushing towards them. Soon everyone else saw them, and a wave of despair washed over them.

A hundred undead were enough to slice their forces in half. But now, thousands were headed their way. Not to mention most of them were either out of stamina or were riddled with injuries. Fighting wasn't an option anymore.

While everyone was worrying about their lives, Anna couldn't care less about hers. If the entire city of undead was heading towards them, then did Ashton fail? That was the only thought inside her head.

"I'm afraid you're wrong, mistress," Sven mumbled while sneaking up to Anna, "Our lives are linked to our master's. The fact that we are alive and well is all the proof you need to affirm master's survival."

Even Celeste decided to chime in, "As much as fun it'd be to see you cry, the master will kill me if that happened. Moreover, I'd suggest you take a closer look at the horde before killing off our beloved master."

"What do you-" Anna mumbled before complying with Celeste's suggestion, "Wait, is that Ashton leading them!?"

Chapter 498 Emissary Of Death

Anna rushed to Ashton, unsure why the undead army was accompanying him. Although Ashton could control any undead species, the control would eventually be passed back to the undead after a while.

Anna knew this, and that's why she was surprised when Ashton brought the undead beings to them. After all, there was no reason for him to endanger everyone else's safety.

"What's going on?" She asked the most obvious question lingering in everyone's head.

"I found a competent ally," Ashton replied, pointing at Bismark, "I present to you the former monarch of Lycania, King Bismark."

King Bismark? Maybe it was supposed to be one of Ashton's not-so-laughable jokes. How could a walking skeleton be Bismark? More importantly, if what Ashton said was true, why would Bismark attack his own people?

A lot of things were not making sense anymore. However, Nora had no doubts the skeleton-like figure was her 'father'. As she was Mera's clone, technically speaking, Bismark was her father as well.

"It's him, alright," She affirmed, "But why is he so skinny? Nirvana prisoners get offered human flesh thrice a day. He should be a chonky boy by now!"

"It's good to see you too, Mera," Bismark emotionlessly mumbled, "I'm glad to see your mouth is as crude as ever."

"You got the wrong name, pops." Nora scoffed, "But then again, I guess I shouldn't blame you since it's the first time you've seen me."

Bismark turned towards Ashton. His gaunt face was surprisingly packed with emotions, or maybe Ashton could feel his expressions because they now shared a mental link.

"Long story," Ashton waved his hand, "It'll be better to let Mera do the explaining."

Ten minutes later, the humans had been rescued, and Ricochet entered the city along with a few crew members to detonate the bomb. Following a vibrant explosion, the air quality instantly improved.

The effects of corpsification gas were reversed. More than a thousand undead had been turned into human beings while the rest joined Bismark's lead and pledged loyalty to Ashton.

It took no time for the news of Ashton's success to reach Livan and the rest of the world. While Lycanians shed tears of joy, the vampire community sighed in relief.

The ever-growing undead population had been a source of tension in their community. But following the successful test of Mera's 'cure', they finally had a way to fight against the undead in their kingdoms.

Ashton was being hailed as their saviour. Even the vampire-kind joined in celebration with the werewolves. It was a joyous occasion, even though Ashton couldn't care less about it.

However, not everything was well. As soon as Nirvana lost contact with Bismark, they assumed the worst. Their fears were quickly confirmed by the spies present in Vania.

Contingency was supposed to be their city to keep the werewolves in check. After all, the undead had a genetic weakness to them, just like vampires were weak against the undead due to their 'poison'.

The way they saw it, the werewolves were the only obstacle standing between them and world domination. However, now that their 'territory' was taken away, they could no longer sit idly.

The senate members, who were drunk on power, had a rude awakening. In their eyes, they were unstoppable, but Ashton managed to put them in their place not once but twice.

"First the loss of our facilities, and now this..." The President sighed; things were not looking bright for his kind, "We don't have a choice left. Call him for help."

"Sir, are you sure-" Jady

"He swore he'll help us once," The President interrupted, "I know it might seem unnecessary, but we need everyone we can have on our side. Even if it includes bloodthirsty outworlders."

"Very well, sir. I'll contact Phantom immediately."

Jady bowed and left the President in solitude. Their relationship with Phantom was of mutual benefit. Just like Phantom was the first Outworlder to grace them with his presence, Nirvana was the first place that Phantom could 'rule' over.



But one day, Phantom killed someone who gave him unimaginable powers. Although it was a significant loss for Nirvana at the time, that incident triggered its excellence and rapid growth.

That said, when Niravan expressed displeasure over the loss of one of their best scientist, Phantom swore on his blood to help the country of the undead in time of dire need.

The President believed it was time to call in the big guns. Mainly because the undead had no idea who they were dealing with. Having someone like Phantom on their side would ensure not only their victory but also complete reign over the earth.

After all, once the werewolves get wiped out, there'll be no one to stop them.

Unbeknownst to them, they weren't the only ones to have intergalactic friends. A fact they'd know in due course of time. But for now, the only thing they could do was prepare for the war for their existence.

As for Ashton, well, there was something else he needed to handle. It seems having a lich on his side had had some effect on him. The genes of the Grim reaper were synergising with Bismark's lich form.

The effect wasn't limited to him but extended to his summons. The latter part wasn't surprising since his summons were technically a part of him. But it was the effect that surprised him.

—

You have received a new skill!

[Emissary of Death]: When Death values a person's worth and effort, the honour of being its emissary is handed to them.

[Skill effect]: Allows the user to tap into the power of Death and control it temporarily. When on the brink of Death, it can bring back the title holder to life... at a cost.

[Duration]: The effect can be triggered once every six months. But the subsequent resurrection would consume twice more souls.

[Initial skill Cost]: Soul of a summon.

[Additional effect]: The skill can also be used to resurrect other beings. However, the person will lose their memories right before the resurrection.

Chapter 499 King Homely (1)

[Emissary of Death] wasn't a skill that should exist. Well, at least that's what Astaroth said as soon as the prompt popped up. According to him, the Precursors had a set of rules called Primiosis Laws.

One of the most significant laws was never to resurrect oneself or others, and the Precursors had ensured none of the skills related to resurrection ever saw the day of light. That's why it was most surprising when Ashton received a reality-shattering ability like [Emissary of Death].

However, Ashton had a rough idea of how and why he got the ability. His father was a Precursor who had seen his future and helped him seal the ill effects of Grim Reaper's scythe.

Although it was only a theory, his father might have imparted the skill to him while they were saying their final goodbyes to each other. It had to be that because Ashton had no other reason to why he would receive such a skill.

That said, he couldn't explain his theory to Astaroth because that would mean Ashton would have to tell the resident consciousness about his father. Something his father had instructed him not to do before departing to the afterlife.

[Oi! Can't you hear me?]

'Don't think I have a reason to,' Ashton smugly replied, 'It's just another skill that I'll never use, so why does it matter?'

[I respect you being drunk on overconfidence, but this matter isn't about you! Don't you see? If information about this ability gets out, the Xyrans will stop at nothing before they get their hands on you!]

Astaroth's words snapped Ashton back into reality. While what Astaroth said was true, he might never use the skill. But if he did, all hell would break loose.

Since Xyrans monitor most of the species in the galaxy, they could find out about [Emissary of Death]. If that were to happen, things would get ugly real soon.

Despite getting stronger since his fight with Beelzebub, Ashton wasn't delusional in thinking he could win against them by himself.

It was also one of the reasons why Ashton wanted Astaroth to have his own body now. After all, stopping two of them would've been difficult, even for the Xyrans.

'Now's not the time to think about wars ahead of me.' Ashton thought to himself.

[You're spacing out again!]

'I was wondering about the undead.'

[What about them?]

'How to torture them, that's what.'

[Hm... I suppose that'll be challenging. How is one supposed to torture creatures that don't register pain.]

'That aside, it's time to visit your brother.]

Brother... it had been a while since the word lost its meaning for Astaroth. Sure, Seraph raised them as such, but the betrayal from Astaroth's side had destroyed their relationship for good.

That said, even Astaroth couldn't repudiate that gluttonous bastard's value on a battlefield. Since Ashton was deadset on waging war against Nirvana, there couldn't have been a better soldier than Beelzebub by his side.

However, the meeting between them would have to wait. Now that the restrictions were lifted, Ashton wanted to gather more souls to create summons.

It would help him in the upcoming battle, and spare souls could be consumed in the unfortunate event when [Emissary of Death] had to be used. Thankfully, Contingency had no shortage of souls for Ashton to gather.

"Time to make yourself useful, Bismark."

\*\*\*

Three days later, everyone was back in Livan. The city was in the middle of a joyous celebration. After all, it wasn't every day the living vanquished the undead.

Delegates from kingdoms close and far were also in attendance, and so were Anna's parents. It was the first time Ashton was about to meet them, and nothing could have made him nervous more than the possibility of them rejecting him.

"I'd rather fight the Xyrans without a weapon than go through this," Ashton mumbled while fixing his attire.

[Don't be a pussy now. How bad can it be? Either way, you should have thought about it before messing around with their daughter.]

"Sure, take advice about relationships from a virgin," Ashton scoffed, "I might be nervous, but my days aren't bad enough to take dating advice from you."

[You... I have had enough! Just wait! I don't care about anything else, but the moment I get a body, I'll get rid of this virgin tag once and for all!]

"Good luck getting laid with all that desperation oozing out of your body."

Ashton had to cut their bickering short. It wasn't wise for him to keep the others waiting since he was the star of the party. But before he could leave, someone else entered his chambers.

"Gosh, and people say girls take time to get ready," Anna said playfully.

Ashton took one look at her, and his jaw hit the floor. Anna had always looked beautiful, but she had pulled all the stops off this time.

Her usually tied hair was straight, her fiery red eyes were as beautiful as ever, and her figure was like a perfect hourglass. When she stopped before him, she was like a magazine cut-out dropped onto a celebrity sidewalk.

Her black dress left her shoulders uncovered. Instead, it was supported around her neck and flowed into a graceful cowl neckline. It was a tight fit which gave the dress a classy and polished look. Even Eula would have a tough time matching Anna's beauty.

"Stop staring, will ya?" Anna sheepishly mumbled while tucking a stray strand of hair behind her ear.

"As you wish, madame." Ashton replied before offering her a hand, "Shall we?"

"Of course!"

The two of them entered the community hall, hand in hand. There wasn't a single head that hadn't turned the moment their presence was felt. Was it due to Ashton's extraordinary feats? He doubted it. But he was wrong.

After everything he had achieved, Ashton was a man everyone would want to be close with, and their behaviour made it abundant. While greeting everyone, the duo came across an elderly couple.

"Ashton, I would like you to meet my parents." Anna eagerly introduced them, and Ashton offered his hand to her father. However, it seemed like the latter had little interest in entertaining him.

"SO this is the lad who stole my girl," The man's crimson eyes glared through Ashton's soul, "Let's see if you're as good as everyone says you are, shall we?"

Chapter 500 King Homely (2)

Standing before Ashton was a 7' 3" tall, golden-brown-skinned man. While his face was void of emotion, his crimson eyes gave away his intentions.

Aside from that, the man also had a large burn scar on his face, of which he was pretty proud. His elbow-length, fine, brown hair flowed freely behind his back, giving the man a much more graceful look than what suited his demeanour.

His looks weren't the only things that attracted everybody's attention to him. Despite his age, his physique was quite astonishing. Heck, his father-in-law could even put Atlas's body to shame.

After all, it wasn't common for someone's chiselled abs to show through formal wear. Not to mention his strong hands that were covered in a collage of mythical creature tattoos.

"It'd be a shame to decline your request, sir." Ashton politely replied before curling up his fist, "Unfortunately, this is not the place to assert dominance over each other."

"Huh, giving a show to the spectators is what a warrior should live for!" Montagu, Anna's father, scoffed, "I thought you would share similar sentiments. But it seems your capabilities were nothing but a hoax."



Everyone who knew what kind of man Ashton was gasped. Especially the Ghosts. None of them had ever seen their captain taken so lightly.

"The last man who provoked him like this had his head sent flying," Ricochet mumbled, remembering how 'Dolos' came into being.

However, Ashton's expression remained unchanged. Anna had already warned him about her father's overprotectiveness towards her, making Ashton question Anna again.

It wouldn't make sense if he allowed Anna to leave the planet with a bunch of strangers if he was so protective of her. Which, in turn, ended in Anna confessing that she never told Montagu about her leaving. Her mother knew about it, but no one else did.

Armed with this new information, Ashton was prepared to deal with Montagu.

"You should be thankful it was a hoax," Ashton chuckled, throwing his hands in the air, "besides, I'm not going to fight you, no matter how much you provoke me."

"..."

Montagu was speechless. From what he had heard about Ashton, he wasn't a man to back down from a challenge. Moreover, his temperament was well-known within the community.

A prideful warrior. That's how everyone described him—a man who does not know to compromise at the cost of his honour.

That's why Montagu challenged and berated Ashton in the heart of the party. He was sure a prideful man would not take crap from anyone when so many eyes were on him.

But the reality was quite different.

Not only did Ashton take his verbal abuse without lashing out, he even threw his hands up to say he wasn't interested in a fight.

It'd be weirder if Montagu wasn't confused right about now. After acting his part well, he was sure he could get Ashton to show his 'true' colours. Then he could judge whether Ashton was a suitable match for his daughter.

Suddenly Montagu broke down laughing and threw his Arm around Ashton's shoulders. Anna knew what was coming next and tried distancing herself, but Montagu caught her as well, pulling the couple in for a bear hug!

The room erupted in smiles and laughs. Lycanian nobility was well aware of Montagu's warm heart and compassion towards others, and that's why his earlier behaviour came off as strange to them. But everything was back to normal, if not for what Anna was planning.

Within moments, Anna took hold of her father's Arm and slammed him onto the ground. The wooden flooring shattered instantly, with Montagu's head buried deep inside.

"I told you not to pull your stunts here, you nosy wuss!" Anna yelled.

While everyone was a bit taken aback by Anna's sudden outburst, no one was as surprised as Ashton. She had always spoken highly of her family; consequently, it was a surprise she just destroyed her father like that.

"Hehe, my apologies, my dearest daughter." Montagu smiled while wiping the dust off his head and shoulders.

"It's alright- oww!" Anna replied but was suddenly pulled away from the crowd.

"You brat, I warned you not to treat your father like a ragdoll," The woman politely communicated those... pleasant words while pulling Anna away through her ear.

The woman was her mother, Mathilda Swan. Surprisingly, Anna didn't even try defending herself and instead kept smiling. Being away from home had had its effect on her. But now that she was back with her family, she could make up for the lost time.

Ashton was happy for her, but somewhere in his heart, he felt a bit... alone. The 'fun' times he had spent with his parents were all in an enclosure, bounded by chains. However, being five years old at the time, even those 'fun' memories were all over the place.

"Never mess with Swan women," Montagu mumbled, "My father warned me before marriage, but what reason can win against love? While the girls duke it out, allow me to introduce myself. The name's Baron Montagu Swan, but you can call me father-in-law!"

[HAHAHAHAHA!]

"Isn't it a bit too soon for that?" Ashton mumbled absentmindedly, "I mean, you barely know me."

"Are you planning to 'hit and run' my daughter?" Montagu questioned Ashton with a nightmarish expression.

"Of course not!" Ashton hastily replied, while gazing over to Anna, "I'll die before I leave her. That's my word."

"Then we are good!" Montagu returned to his jolly mood, patting Ashton on the back, "To me, the way you look at my daughter is more than enough proof of your love for Anna. But I should warn you if you ever--"

"Can we skip the cliché? We both know I won't ever harm her. Nor will I let anyone harm her... again." Ashton replied, "If you don't mind, can I ask you a question?"

"Anything!"

"That scar on your face... Anna did that, didn't she?"

"Why, of course! She was playing with my beard when she awakened her powers," Montagu proudly explained, "In Swan household, there's a saying. The one to get burned first by the offspring is also loved by them the most! But I'm sure you already knew that when she tossed me earlier!"

[Don't mess with Swan women. A wise saying indeed.]