

Zompiewolf 51

Chapter 51 - Reward Time (2)

The tensions were running high. However, most of them except those who finished in the top five were too exhausted to do anything. The Gruntas might have tried to instigate a fight, but even they were not going to waste their precious time on such a squabble.

But Anna siding with a mutt came as a surprise to all of them. She was of noble descent, in fact, her family was one of the first ones to mobilise and fight against the humans. They why the hell was she siding with someone who was once a human himself?

"Anna, do you think you're making a wise choice?" Nicole Asked her, while her voice was as polite as it could possibly have been, her eyes were filled with disgust.

"We are werewolves. Not vampires who believe in blood supremacy." Anna shrugged her shoulders before replying, "We are supposed to encourage the strong ones to reach beyond their limits. I for one will like to have capable soldiers by my side than useless nobles who can do nothing but talk."

Her last line was obviously a jab at Lucas. After all, it was no secret that talking was all he was good at and nothing else. Hell, he couldn't even properly wield a sword even if his life depended on it.

"Anna, you're crossing the line-" Before Nick could complete what he was saying, he was interrupted by a sudden sound of clapping.

"Well said, Ms Swan. But then again I would have expected nothing less from the heiress of the holy kingdom of the south."

"It's a pleasure to be praised by Madam Director herself." Anna who was about to burst into flames quickly regained her composure and respectfully greeted her composure.

"Oh my, and here I was thinking I would have to introduce myself. Thanks for the assist on that part Ms Swan." Madam Director gave her a curt nod before facing the nobles, "Looks like you need to be taught a lesson if you think nobility is superior to others in anything apart from the privileged upbringing most of you have."

"I am a so-called Mutt." The director continued, "Do you still think Mutts are weaker than those with pure and noble blood?"

No one had any answer to her question. In other words, it could be said that none of them was foolish enough to talk back with someone of her status and strength. The city of Contingent was the only place where Nobility could be looked down upon. Albeit, no one openly admitted it.

It was also one of the reasons why the merchants set up shops there instead of the nearby kingdoms. That way they don't need to deal with the hassle of dealing with the nobility and paying unnecessary taxes. They could do their business without worrying about offending a noble or anything.

However, just getting them to go silent wasn't enough. Also, she had taken a liking to both Ashton and Anna. Therefore, she wanted to give them their rewards for entertaining her during the first round.

"On the grounds of provoking violence on academy campus and propagating hateful speech, I hereby strip Nicole and Nick Grunta from their places on the leaderboards." The director proclaimed and snapped her fingers.

The following moment there was a change in the leaderboards and the first and second places had been interchanged with the third and fourth place. Effectively making the Gruntas go from occupying the first and second place to third and fourth place respectively.

Just like that, Ashton and Anna got the first and the second place respectively. The rest of the board remained unchanged. However, it did not look like the Gruntas were going to stand for such blatant favouritism.

"This is not fair!" Nicole yelled at the top of her lungs as the Director essentially stripped their rewards away from them, "You cannot do this-"

"I think I know very well what I can and can't do Ms Nicole. Also, your and your brother's qualification score is currently being investigated for foul play. You should be grateful that I am still keeping you on the list and not throwing you out this instant."

The director immediately shot her down, "So if you don't want that to happen, I'll suggest you keep it down or I'll be forced to revoke your admission altogether."

But Nicole wasn't going to stop. She had completely lost her calm demeanour and was about to make another absurd remark. However, before she could do that, Nick stepped in and cut her off.

"I would like to apologise on behalf of my sister, Madam Director. You won't hear any complaints about us from now on."

"I wouldn't count on it, but I guess I can give you a second chance. Do not disappoint me. " The director nodded before turning to face Ashton, "Now gentleman, would you accompany me to the rewards room?"

Although Ashton was happy that he will get the best of the rewards, the look on the faces of the others had him worried. His plans to stay lowkey had been obliterated to shreds. On top of that, he wasn't so sure that the Gruntas or the other nobles were going to stay true to their words.

"Here we are." The Director mumbled entering a fairly empty room with just a chest in the centre of it, "Your rewards, well... you can keep the items obtained during the exam for yourself along with the belongings of this chest as well. I'll leave you to it then."

"Thank you. If you hadn't intervened, things might have gotten a bit... out of hand." Ashton gave her a genuinely respectful nod.

"Don't mention it. Goodbye, Ashton Fenrir."

Ashton smiled and turned around to unlock the chest. But then he turned back as fast as lightning.

"How do you... know my name?"

To Ashton's surprise, there was no one standing there. The director had disappeared already leaving him perplexed. For all Ashton knew, his real name was never revealed to anyone there. Then how the hell did the Director know his real last name?

'I have a feeling I should stay away from her... she's too enigmatic.' Ashton shook his head, "But first let's take a look at the rewards."

He opened the chest and was blinded by a sudden golden glow coming out of the chest. It took a couple of seconds for the glow to subside but when it did... it left Ashton in shock. Just a few hours ago he had obtained his first skill after hitting level 10 on his werewolf genes.

The skill he obtained back then was a basic skill as the skill page looked like a normal piece of paper. But this time... he had obtained a 'Golden Skill Page'. These were extremely rare. So much so that even the mistress had a hard time obtaining a couple of these for herself and Donovan.

Yet he had obtained one with minimal efforts. It was no wonder that Nicole was pissed after being stripped away from claiming the first place rewards.. Ashton was so excited he tore the page in half without even going through its contents.

Chapter 52 - One Skill? More Like Three

'Shit! Shit! Shit! This I don't know much about golden skill pages, but I'm pretty sure this ain't normal... damn it!'

While tearing the skill page, Ashton thought he was gonna get an absurdly overpowered skill, and he wasn't wrong. But the thing was... he didn't get one skill... but three! One for each type of genes he possessed.

Golden skill pages were the only skill pages that did not show a specific skill that could be redeemed after using the page. Instead, the skill page awarded a skill, based on the user's capabilities and genes.

As Ashton had not one but three sets of genes present in him, he ended up getting three skills instead of one. You would think he was going to be happy about it, and he was... for a moment. Until he realised they were supposed to undergo a scan to see which ability the winners had obtained.

Apparently, the students from prior batches had tried to lie about it. Therefore, the words of the examinees could not be trusted. Each one of the skills was overpowered, to say the least, but Ashton was worried the scanner might be able to show his skills even if he deactivated the genes associated with the said skills.

If that happened and the officials realised that he is a tribrid being... attending the academy would be the last of his worries.

'I have deactivated the genes and that's all I can do for now.' Ashton sighed heavily, 'Worrying about it would only make me look more suspicious.'

"Ashton Bismark, please step into the scanner."

"Yes!"

Ashton nodded and stood inside the gigantic pod in front of him. A moment later the glass pod closed and got filled with a colourless gas. Ashton felt the air around him get heavy and it almost made him drowsy. Apart from that, there was the laser which was continuously scanning from all angles while he stood naked.

Thankfully, there was no one inside the room apart from the Director and the operator of the machine. Both of them had their eyes glued to the screen in front of them as if they were trying not to make any awkward eye contact.

"Wait... there seems to be something wrong with the machine." The operator mumbled before pointing at something, "The stats appear to be malfunctioning."

"Can there be a fault in the machine?" The Director replied, even though she said that she herself appear to not believe that there could be any fault in the machine.

For a second, Ashton's heart jumped to his throat. It felt as if his secret was going to come out much sooner than he had anticipated. Honestly, at the moment he was wondering whether or not he should try to make a break for it and get out of there.

But he knew, doing so would be like putting the final nail into his coffin. In other words, Ashton did not have any choice but to stay there and hope for the best.

'I would be hoping for miracles if I didn't know how shitty my luck was.'

However, it appeared this time the luck was actually on his side as, after a second of fluctuating, his stats suddenly normalised. There was nothing more Ashton needed to worry about.

"Level 10 already huh? It's quite impressive, Mr Bismark." The operator smiled and looked up... at someplace she shouldn't have and immediately averted her gaze, "Let's... assume this thing never happened..."

"Haha, Micheala, we're all adults here and I'm pretty sure Ashton would mind a lady looking at him. Will you Mr Bismark?" The director smiled as Ashton's face turned darker than crimson.

"That's... um..."

"Don't worry kiddo. She's just messing with you. No need to stay naked anymore. You are free to get dressed."

Ashton took the operator's word for it and jumped out of the pod before getting dressed as quick a lightning. He then headed towards the director to get his student card and uniform. It was a black and silver outfit similar to the ones that he had seen numerous other volunteer students he had seen before the exam started.

"This card will serve as both your identity and as a cash card." The director explained it to him, "However, the weekly allowance you will get will depend on the rank you receive in the second round of the exams. But as you have claimed the first place, some money had been already deposited into the card for you."

As the Director said that, the card blinked once and a number popped up in front of Ashton.

"10000 Blue units!" Ashton was wide-eyed.

Obviously, the mistress had taught him about the global currency they used and 10000 blue units were something Ashton never thought he would have. Just to get a gist of it, White units were the smallest denominator of currency they had.

Daily basic necessities could be bought with about a hundred white units per week. But these were only the basic necessities like food, water and a place to live. Nothing extravagant. 100 white units were equal to 1 red unit which was considered to be the currency of the lower middle class.

An average working household would be able to bring about 20 red units per week into their homes. It wasn't too much, but it was enough for them to lead a quiet life. After red units, came blue units.

1 blue unit was equal to 100 red units and was probably the highest denominator of currency that higher-class workers could afford. Then came the silver unit one of which was equal to 1000 blue units, then gold which was equivalent to 100 silver and then, at last, the black unit... a currency that even the ruler of Lycania did not possess.

That was the reason why having 10000 units in hand, left Ashton flabbergasted. This was the final surprise the Director had prepared for him and to say that it was a welcomed surprise would have been an understatement.

"Before you leave, I have a piece of advice for you. You have received quite a unique skill, Ashton. Make sure to only use it under special circumstances." The director said with a serious tone, "Using it recklessly might cause you more harm than good. Is that understood?"

Ashton nodded and left the room. But he was a bit perplexed. What was so good about his [Aggravate] skill? It was overpowered a bit as it rendered the effect of healing potions and other healing abilities useless on the wounds he made... but in his opinion, it wasn't something as serious as the director was making it out to be.

'I wonder what she would have said if she knew about my other skills...' Ashton thought as a notification popped in front of him, listing the abilities he had obtained from the skill page.

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> Unique Werewolf skill: (can be evolved along with the user's grade)

[Aggravate]: Wounds made while in Werewolf form won't heal unless the user allows them to. Causes severe haemorrhage can lead to death if not controlled effectively.

> Unique Vampire Skill: (can be evolved along with the user's grade)

[Blood Poison]: Effectively turns the User's blood into poison which can be used to inflict continuous <Poison> damage upon enemies.

> Unique Undead Skill: (can be evolved along with the user's grade)

[Corpse parade]: This skill allows the user to temporarily make a lower level undead do their bidding. Can also be used to make skeleton soldiers to temporarily aid the user in battle.

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'If anything... the skills I earned for vampire and undead genes are much more dangerous.'

Chapter 53 - True Strength

"You sure took your sweet time to get out of there." Disha was waiting for Ashton for more than a couple of hours, "For a second I thought you died or something. So which place did you get?"

Ashton was the last person to get scanned, and hence it took him some time to get out of the academy. Honestly, he was hoping he wouldn't see any of the mistress's disciples even though he knew it was nothing more than wishful thinking.

He was an asset to the mistress, why the hell would she leave him alone after all she had done 'for him'?

"First place," Ashton mumbled as if it was nothing special and kept walking.

It took a couple of seconds for Disha to realise what Ashton had just said. But even then, she had to confirm it for herself.

"First? Are you for real?"

"Yeah, why? Is there something wrong?"

"tell me everything that happened."

As they made their way towards where the mistress was staying, Ashton narrated everything he could remember to Disha. Who ended up being more and more surprised the more Ashton talked. By the time their tale was over, both of them had arrived at the rented cottage the mistress had booked.

It wasn't anything lavish, but it was much more comfortable than many other lodgings available there. To Ashton's surprise, the human slave couple whom the officers had been bullying, were being treated inside.

While half a dozen officers were standing in the middle of the room completely naked, on their knees and appeared as if they had been dragged back to earth from the edge of hell. Their blood was everywhere around the lodge.

Ashton didn't know what to make out of it. On one hand, he was happy that the humans were safe. But on the other hand, he was wondering what the hell was the mistress planning to do with the officers.

But the moment, he saw the mistress... he realised there was something wrong with the Mistress. She appeared to be stronger. Much stronger than Ashton could have even imagined. Obviously, it was just a hunch because the system still classified her as 'Extremely dangerous'.

The aura around her sent shivers down Ashton's spine. He was literally shaking there just by being around her. The bodyguards around the mistress weren't ferrying well either. They too were struggling to keep themselves together. But unlike Ashton, they were doing a pretty good job at controlling their fear.

"Calm down and breathe slowly... you have been holding it in for more than five minutes."

Suddenly Disha hissing voice brought him back to his senses and he started breathing again. But at that moment, his perception of the mistress had shattered completely. The levels he had presumed her to be on... no longer seemed valid.

'She had been hiding her real strength all this time?' Ashton thought as a bead of sweat trickled down his face, 'Is this even her real strength. or is she still holding back?'

The officers of Contingent were much stronger than any of the bodyguards. Even if all of them combined their strength, they would have only been able to take care of one or maybe two of them at most.

But there they were, six guards in a state so miserable that even Ashton got the creeps. It was clear that the mistress had done this to them herself. With that, came another realisation... a realisation about why the hell did no one bother her even though she was openly hostile towards the king of Lycania.

It was because they knew confronting her head-on would be a foolish move. to eliminate her, they would have to take heavy losses as well, which would then make it a perfect opportunity for the neighbouring kingdoms to try and invade them.

The King and the mistress were at a stalemate. That's why she needed a weapon to overcome the deadlock ensure her victory.

A moment later, mistress realised that Ashton was there and almost immediately the hostile aura around her dissipated. The look of rage was still evident on her face, but for some reason, Ashton felt a bit more comfortable now without the constant pressure of the Mistress's strength looming over his head like a guillotine.

'I wanted to kill her? I can't even harm a single strand of her hair as I am now.' Ashton could feel his dead heart beating inside his chest as if he had just finished a marathon.

"Ah, you're here." The mistress calmly walked over to them while her bodyguards dragged the officers and the slaves away, "It took a bit longer than I expected it would. So, how did he do?"

"Pretty good. I think the Director has taken an interest in him. That was the reason he was the last to walk out of the campus." Disha replied with a worrisome smile on her face, "Don't know whether it's a good thing or not. But she apparently handed the first position over to him."

The Mistress nodded her head before extending her hand towards Ashton, "Open your information tab. I want to see something."

Ashton knew better than to argue with her so he did as he was told. Unlike last time, Mistress was looking at the tab intently as if she knew there was something more hidden underneath what Ashton was showing her. Still, she had no way to uncover the secret of Ashton being a tribrid being.

"Wait a minute... since when did you have the [Aggravate] skill?" Mistress's eyes seemed to have caught on to something.

"I received it from the golden skill page I was awarded..." Ashton mumbled a reply.

Neither the Mistress nor Disha spoke a word for what seemed like minutes. They just stared at each other intently before the Mistress broke into maniacal laughter. Disha too was smiling but she had herself under control.

"it would appear you are really one lucky rascal Ashton!" The mistress managed to say between her fits of laughter and patted him on the head, "You ended up obtaining one of the five rarest skills a werewolf can have. That too at such a young age!"

Ashton was left even more perplexed after hearing the Mistress's words. What was such a big deal about this skill after all? But before he could ask her about it, the Mistress decided it was time to have dinner and call it a day.. Leaving Ashton with his word thoughts.

Chapter 54 - Slaves Or Spies?

There wasn't much for Ashton to do after they had dinner. And as usual, Ashton ate his food away from everyone else. He didn't show it in public, but although, as days passed he was becoming more and more like werewolves and lowing understanding them more and more, he still detested them. Especially after what those twins and other nobles tried to pull.

Ashton couldn't believe that he even thought that the Gruntas would be any different than the other noble brats. After all, all of them were peas in a pod. However, their absurd way of thinking had filled Ashton's head with a plan and a resolve to make the second round a memorable one for them.

'According to the schedule given to us, the second phase will begin in about a week.' Ashton thought to himself while he played around with the system, 'That should be enough time for me to come up with something.'

Since Ashton's plan of staying lowkey had already been thrown out of the window, he no longer saw a reason to hold back against the others. If they wanted to make him the centre of attention, then so be it. He wasn't going to do just that but carefully.

He couldn't just openly declare war against the nobles. The shit didn't work like that. He had to be sneaky and with the things he obtained today, it should be a bit easier.

'Let's see what I have...' Ashton thought as he opened his inventory, 'Using the twin blade is out of the question. Which leaves me with the Bony whip as my only weapon. Nemean Hide is a top tier armour so I don't need to worry about protecting my chest.'

However, those were the only two pieces of equipment he had. He needed proper gears to protect the rest of his body as well as a weapon that could be used in short range. The whip was an excellent weapon.

Unlike anything, Ashton had wielded before. But using it freely and in short-range combat was a bit troublesome. That was the reason why Ashton kept using the whip to increase his manoeuvrability while dealing damage to his targets with his limbs.

'Thankfully, I have money that I can use to solve that problem easily. The only problem is... I don't know where to spend it.'

It was his first time ever having some money, so he didn't exactly know how to bargain and stuff like that. The way he was now, his biggest worry was that he would end up getting ripped off if he were to go to the market by himself.

He already knew a lot of vendors would try to wrong him, especially after seeing the king of money he had. So he decided it was better if someone were to accompany him while he did what he had to

'As much as I'd hate to ask the mistress for help. I don't think I have any other choice. Hmm... maybe I should try asking Disha. Then, either way, she would have to take permission from the mistress before doing anything.'

One way or the other the mistress was going to know what he was planning to do. So he decided it was better for him to be the one to give her the news...

'I'll think about it tomorrow. For now, I'll just sleep- oh come on!'

Knock... knock...

After fighting for the better part of the day, it was obvious that Ashton was tired. But it seemed someone didn't want him to have any sort of rest.

Ashton opened the door and there stood the mistress along with the human slave couple. The slaves appeared to be in a much better condition now that their wounds have been treated and their bellies well fed. The only thing which remained to be seen was why the heck were they there?

"Did you need something, mistress?"

Ashton wanted to be as cold with her as he was before, but after seeing what the mistress was capable of doing, he chose not to. Who knew when her head would flip over and she would start beating the living hell out of him just because she felt like that.

The mistress turned towards the slaves and they immediately went down on their knees.

"We are at your service, Lord Ashton."

"Eh? The hell are they spouting now? Me, a lord?"

"Of course, you're a lord. Just like the others in the academy." The mistress said before walking inside his room and making herself comfortable on the bed, "You did not expect me to send a member of my family to the academy without an escort, did you?"

"But this... isn't this a bit excessive? I mean why would I even need servants there in the first-"

"You seem to be mistaken. I wasn't asking whether or not you want to take them with you. I was merely stating that you will be accompanied by them. Is that understood?" The mistress said with a certain finality in her voice.

Ashton bit his tongue. He knew exactly why the Mistress was doing that. She needed someone to keep an eye on him and even if these slaves were supposed to be his 'escorts', they were more like informants keeping an eye on him in her stead.

Also, since the slaves were saved by the mistress, it was a given that they would have an undying loyalty towards her. As a result, if they end up accompanying him, he would certainly have more than enough trouble to level up his other genes without raising suspicion.

In other words... he was fcked for good. It was a rule for the escorts to accompany their Lords and Ladies everywhere. Even in the academy. The classes and the dorms were included in this.

"Now that you have been acquainted, we shall take our leave," Mistress mumbled as the humans got back to their feet and left after her. Leaving Ashton alone in his room.

'I have to think of a way to get them off my back... at least during the night.'

Nighttime was essentially the only time when he could hunt and level up as a vampire and an undead. This being able to roam freely was an absolute necessity for him. Ashton wracked his brains for some time, thinking of ways to get rid of them...

Then an idea hit him. He quickly opened the rules and regulations of the academy and there it was... written in golden letters. A way for him to get rid of the slaves from tracing his every step.

"Looks like I will have to hold back during the second round of the exam.... guess I don't have any other choice."

Chapter 55 - Market Feud (1)

The next day, Ashton acted as if nothing was wrong and headed out along with Disha. Obviously, they had to take permission from the mistress before doing so.

The mistress also wanted the slaves to accompany them. But Ashton refused by saying since they were going to accompany him throughout the duration of his education and training in the academy, it was only fair that he was allowed to live the rest of the week without feeling like anyone was tracking him.

The mistress thought about it for a couple of minutes and then allowed the two of them to go without the slaves. She initially wanted to make the slaves get acquainted with Ashton's habits as soon as they could...

But then again, she thought maybe she was being too irrational and after all, Disha was accompanying him already. On top of that, she had not even rewarded or acknowledged Ashton after getting the first position in the exam. So this could be a way for her to do so.

"Finally out of there... phew." Ashton stretched a bit while walking on the streets, "What about you Disha? Don't you feel a bit overworked? I mean being around the mistress is quite draining isn't it? Also Don't you miss being a human?"

"I would rather be overworked than be treated like shit." Disha sighed, "As far as the question of missing my humanity... I don't think there's anything stopping me from continuing to behave like one. I mean I still pretty much look the same and all. If anything I can enjoy being a human more while staying as a werewolf, than being a human, if you know what I mean."

She continued, "Like imagine being a vampire or an undead. Being forced to transform into one of those would have really sucked. At least right now I can enjoy my heartbeat and the feeling of the sun kissing my skin. I can never even think about living as a Vampire or an Undead."

Ashton nodded to her reply and kept walking. Well... there was nothing wrong with what Disha was saying. Even as 'mutts' their life was much better than living in the enclosures till the last of their days. Also, objectively, there was nothing wrong with being a werewolf... if it wasn't for what they had done to his parents.

At that moment, Ashton realised he didn't have problems with the werewolves, just with the Mistress for doing what she did. Still, he hated all of them 'pureblooded' bastards. Soon he began remembering everything the werewolves had done for and against him and well... the things they had done to vex him outweighed the things they had done to help him.

While lost in his thoughts, he heard a sudden commotion erupt in front of one of the countless stores. They had already arrived at Merchant Avenue. The marketplace of Contingent where one could find anything and everything as long as they had enough money for it.

From exotic slaves to weapons and potions, everything anyone would need was readily available there. And right now, there was a crowd gathered in front of one of such shops. It also happened to be the shop Ashton wanted to visit first.

Divine Armoury... that was the name of the shop. However, contrary to the name, the shop looked everything but divine. It was clear that the place had not been maintained for some time as the paints were coming off of the walls and mould growing on everything.

However, Ashton knew not to judge a book by its cover. After all, this shop was arguably the best shop to buy weapons and other gear from. The crowd gathered in front of the shop was only proof of what kind of great goods did the shop had to offer.

"Let's check it out," Disha said and the two of them headed into the shop.

'This... is crap!'

That was Ashton's first thought as soon as he looked at some of the 'great' weapons the merchant had to offer. None of the weapons there were even of uncommon quality, let alone rare quality like Ashton was looking for.

As if selling shitty things was not enough for the merchant, they were being sold at absurd prices. Like none of the weapons even had a permanent blessing on them and yet they were priced at 1000 blue units or more.

Ashton had even started to wonder whether this place was a joke or an actual armoury. Hell, even the rusty weapons he had trained with were much better than these shiny ones. It was still a wonder why all these idiots were buying these weapons that wouldn't even last more than a month.

'Well... I do know the answer for that.' Ashton shook his head and put the sword he had been looking at, back in its place.

As the mistress had already told him... none of them possessed the innate detection skill as he did. For them, the only way to get to know about the true stat of the gear was to buy it and then pay another merchant to verify the usefulness of the said gear.

In other words, it could be said that the merchants were one unit hellbent on making as much money from the others as they could. That was the reason most of these people took the merchant's word for the skills and stats associated with a certain gear.

But this trick only worked on commoners and lower-ranked soldiers and officers. As the rest of them had more than enough money to get their weapons made from scratch and by reputed weaponsmiths.

But since Ashton could know about the history of anything he set his eyes on, fooling him using these tricks was impossible. However, he knew better than to anger the merchants so he decided it was wise to stay silent and leave the place.

"Found anything you wanna buy?" Disha asked him as Ashton shrugged his shoulders and walked out.

"Nah... there's nothing worth the price they are asking for," Ashton replied and was about to take a step out of the shop when someone grabbed onto him.

"You boy... are you trying to say my goods are overpriced?" A thunderous voice boomed behind him as the merchant and the owner of the shop jumped right in front of Ashton, "Or do you mean my goods are shit? Huh?"

'... oh boy, here we go again..' Ashton sighed as uninvited trouble crossed his path yet again.

Chapter 56 - Market Feud (2)

Merchant association was like a tight-knit family of scammers. Most, if not all of them had their dirty secrets. Thus no one dared to go against the others in fear that their business venture would be ruined if their secrets got out. That was also the reason why most of them 'helped' each other out in times of need.

Right now, there was one such time of need. A silly good-for-nothing brat had dared to defame a merchant's products! How could they let it pass without getting proper compensation first?

Obviously, all these reasons were bullshit, but it didn't matter to the merchants as long as they earned some extra money. Thus, Ashton became the target for the owner of the shop to extort some money.

"You boy, you dare say my stuff is trash?" A heavy-looking mountain of a man grabbed the back of Ashton's collar and pulled him back inside the shop, "It's one thing to criticise them but to say the things made by the sweat and blood of our artisans and weaponsmiths is trash is utterly unacceptable."

It was the first time Ashton got a good look at the owner's face and he looked exactly like a piece of shit would have. The shop owner's hair looked as if the man had been taking an oil shower. Even his skin was awfully slimy and overall let out a disgusting scent.

If someone were to say that the man looked more like a ball with sticks inserted into it to make up limbs, they wouldn't have been wrong. Other than that, there were no notable features of the man...

"Oi! I'm talking to you, you turd!"

"What do you want? I just said what I thought was correct. Why should I pay 1500 blue units for a bunch of stone arrows?" Ashton was getting irritated, partially due to the man's repulsive smell and partially due to how he was behaving.

"You shit! You think you are some great merchant who can just tell what's something worth just by seeing them?"

Everyone present in the shop started laughing. In their eyes, Ashton was someone who had no idea about how the weapon effects and stat enhancement worked. In other words, he was simply a kid who didn't know what he was talking about.

It was rare for fights to break out in the area of Merchants. Not because they were strong or anything, but because of their 'unity' of convenience. It was safe to say, if someone messed with one merchant, they messed with the entire merchant association.

It was also the reason why even though some of the buyers got cheated now and then, they kept it to themselves because they knew fighting would only get them into more trouble. Hell, they could even ban that person from entering the marketplace of Contingent altogether.

Well, they technically won't be able to do that. But they would stop selling the troublesome person any goods. Even food and water. For obvious reasons, Ashton did not know about it and was only avoiding trouble to not cause even more problems.

However, unlike Ashton, it didn't seem like the shopkeeper was going to let go of the matter so easily.

"Oh, you thought they were shit... I see."

Suddenly the demeanour of the shopkeeper changed as he walked up to the nearest cabinet and took out a black sword. The sword had a thin one-edged blade that was curved a bit and appeared to be extremely sharp. It also had a long grip which suggested it was a sword meant to be wielded using two hands.

The eyes of everyone around them started shining the moment the owner walked back. All of them were behaving as if they had gotten to see some sort of forbidden treasure.

The shopkeeper proudly brandished the sword as if it was the single greatest thing ever made. His performance was so good, Ashton almost wanted to believe him as well. At that moment, he realised why this shop was so famous.

It wasn't because of the quality of things provided there, but how they were presented to the buyers. The shopkeeper was honestly born to do this. But just by one look, Ashton could see what was behind the curtain of all the 'drama' the man was doing.

It was a decent sword. Better than the rest of the things present in the shop. But it was still a common weapon with a low-grade defence boosting enhancement. That was all it took for others to start fawning over the weapon as if it was some godly relic that would save the world from Night creatures.

"This is what the humans used to call a Katana!" The shopkeeper roared in a dramatic voice, "And now I will demonstrate what it can do, at the expense of this child."

Without anyone could even process what the shopkeeper had just said, he swung to katana to rip Ashton's overcoat apart. Everything happened in a flash. The shopkeeper's swing connected with something, but it wasn't Ashton's coat. But to the armour behind him.

The steel-plated armour that was being advertised as having the rare 'unbreakable' charm on it, was slashed in half with a single strike. The merchant had thought he would teach a lesson to Ashton and then make him pay... but now, everything was ruined.

Never in his darkest dreams would he have thought that Ashton would be able to dodge his attack. That's why he went all-out and now he was fcked. Everyone who was present in the shop had their eyes fixated upon the broken 'unbreakable' armour.

"I-It's not like what it s-seems! I a-assure you!" The shopkeeper let go of the sword and began stuttering as he realised what kind of mess he was in, "The armour did not break because it was a counterfeit or something... i-it broke because the sword was just too darn powerful. Y-Yeah that's what happened."

However, it was a bit too late for the shopkeeper to make amend and try covering his mess. Everyone had seen what happened with their own eyes. There was no freaking way the shopkeeper was ever going to make a come back after this mess.

As much as Ashton wanted to know what happened afterwards, he knew if he stayed longer things would get messy. So he made a break for it along with Disha. As soon as they were out of the market, they started laughing uncontrollably. Knowing that the shopkeeper was fcked.

But what they didn't know, was that they should not have messed with the merchant. Those people were neither forgetful nor forgiving.. Sooner or later, what Ashton did would get him in trouble.

Chapter 57 - Rose And Lucifer

When the two of them arrived back at the cottage, Ashton and Disha were still laughing. That was until Disha informed him that Ashton was practically screwed now.

"It might not have been your fault, but I think it's better if you don't visit the merchants anymore," Disha said with utmost seriousness, "The merchants are very vindictive, and either way I don't think anyone would be willing to sell anything to you after what happened."

"Wait what!? None of them? But why?"

Ashton thought it would be fair if the shop they visited refused to sell stuff to him. But the thought that the entire market will boycott him was quite excessive and absurd.

"You ruined a man's business. Do you really think anyone else would try to host you and risk suffering to the same fate?" Disha shrugged her shoulders, "It is what it is, boya."

As much as Ashton was pissed, it was fine. Those idiots didn't have anything worth to be purchased by him either way. So them not selling anything to him should be fine. But there was still the issue of not having proper gears.

"Is there any other way for me to buy some gears?"

"There is. But I will not recommend you to do that. Not yet anyway." Disha shook her head and continued walking towards the cottage, "For now you should focus on the Academy. I'm sure when the time is right, you will get to know about it."

"Why so secretive about it? I wouldn't have to sell my organs or anything, right?" Ashton joked but Disha didn't smile.

"Hm... you could say that losing your limbs and life are common if you decide to go down that line." Disha said before looking at the azure sky, "The life you have lived till now has been quite a sheltered one, Ashton. There are things that will make you question everything that had been going on for the last century. Things that no one has any control over."

Ashton was a bit... fazed by Disha's riddles. To him, it felt like either Disha was trying to dissuade him from doing something rash, or that she genuinely wanted to tell him something but for some reason couldn't.

"Either way, we should head back inside. Maybe the mistress would be able to help you out with gears."

"No."

That was the answer the Mistress gave to Ashton. Disha was hopeful the mistress would help him, after all, the stronger Ashton became the faster she could have achieved her dream and her revenge.

But it appeared that the mistress did not share the same sentiments. Especially given her stoic expression. She was in a somewhat happy mood when they had left in the morning, so something must have happened while they were outside. Something quite troublesome...

"I understand," Ashton replied with utmost sincerity before walking away.

Ashton realised the same thing as well and decided to get away from there before he could get caught in the mess. He didn't know what happened, nor did he care about it.

'As long as she isn't dead, anything's fine with me.'

However, there was something inside him that didn't want someone else to cause too much trouble for her. This emotion wasn't there because Ashton had suddenly developed some feelings for her far from it.

He thought so as he could not get the satisfaction from Mistress's bad mood, knowing that it wasn't something he did. He wanted to be the only one who could make her life miserable. So much so, that she would be begging him to kill her.

That was his plan... to take away everything she had and torture her till she lost her fcking mind. But he knew it was nothing more than a fantasy of his... for now.

'Firstly... I need to get stronger. Strong enough to take the Mistress down by myself. But damn it! I need some gears.'

Ashton never knew how it would feel to have some money and not be able to spend it constructively. Well, now he did. He was practically 'loaded' and yet there was nothing he could spend it on.

He walked into his room thinking about the next steps of his plan. That's when he saw someone else present inside his room. Ashton's eyes could not see who it was, but his perception skill was tingling like crazy.

Seeing no other way, Ashton decided to heighten his sensory organs even more by partially transforming into a werewolf.

[Your senses have grown a bit. Good to know you haven't been wasting your skills why I was away.]

Lucifer's voice echoed inside Ashton's head. And well, Ashton did not know whether he should be happy or worried that he was there.

'Lucifer, where are you?'

[What do you mean where are you? Do you think if I were to come down to earth you will be able to sense me? I thought your intelligence had increased but you're still a moron.]

'...'

This bastard was always calling him a moron. No matter what the context of their talk was, it always ended up with Lucifer calling him a moron.

[Hm... I see you have obtained quite some skills. Maybe you are not that big of a moron after all.]

'Why are you here? If all you wanted was to call me a moron, then thanks. The message was received loud and clear.'

[Sigh... sometimes I forget you are just a kid. Rose would you mind doing the honours?]

As Lucifer uttered those words, a woman appeared right in front of Ashton. She was uncomfortably close to him. Not to mention her black shabby clothing left a little for a teenager's imagination.

"Come on Lucifer, cut the kid some slack." The lady's voice was just as seductive as her appearance.

Rose, as she was called, was a vampire and was using her charm to cloud Ashton's mind. However, it only took Ashton a moment to snap out of the trance of her charms.

"This kid is good..." Suddenly Rose's voice turned serious, "To be able to break out of my charm at such a young age when people can't stop obsessing about intimacy. Impressive."

[I know how to pick 'em.]

"The heck is going on here?" Ashton asked Lucifer and all he could hear was his chuckles.

[I heard you wanted some gears. So I thought I would call in some favours. So, are you ready to go?]

"Go where?"

"To the black market, of course.." Rose replied and quickly dragged him away.

Chapter 58 - Black Market (1)

Ashton freed his hands. He didn't even trust Lucifer completely, how the heck did he think he would trust someone else? A vampire on top of that. If anyone saw him walking around with a vampire, things might get troublesome.

Ashton was someone who should not have known anyone besides the Mistress and the people she was associated with. If he got caught with a vampire, how will he explain that he knew a vampire? Someone would definitely find something odd and his secret would no longer be a 'secret'.

"I don't know you and I don't think accompanying you in broad daylight would be a good choice-" Ashton was in the middle of speaking when he felt Rose's finger on his lips.

"Boya, you talk too much, which is a turn off for most of the ladies like me." She winked at him before lifting her finger, "But I get your concern. A werewolf walking around with a vampire would not be a wise thing to do. Thankfully, I can take care of it."

Rose closed her eyes for a second and the next moment, her pale vampire-like skin turned into one resembling that of the werewolves. Her skin was thriving again and her complexion got livelier... on top of that, even without her charm, she was looking... thicc?

Her previously crimson eyes had turned into a lovely shade of blue. Her face slowly turned red as blood once again started to flow within her body. Her look more or less changed in its entirety.

But there was something much more shocking than Rose's change in appearance. Her looks weren't the only thing that had changed, but her genetics as well. She had just transformed into a werewolf!

To say that Ashton was shocked would have been the understatement of the century. So far he had been thinking he was the only one who possessed multiple genes. But apparently, he wasn't.

'That isn't possible. The system itself told me that I was the first one of my kind.' Ashton recalled the notification he had seen the moment he was awakened, 'There has to be something else that I am missing.'

"Shocking, isn't it?" Rose smiled when she saw the look on Ashton's face, "Don't overthink it too much. I'll explain everything to you on the way. Now let's go."

[Enjoy kids. I'll meet you guys later. Gotta run.]

"So you're saying... Vampire and Werewolves can mate with each other?" Ashton whispered the moment Rose finished explaining why she had both the power of a vampire and a werewolf.

Unlike Ashton, rose did not receive her powers as he did. She did not get bitten by a vampire and a werewolf before their powers could manifest. Instead, she was conceived by a Vampiress and a werewolf.

The thought of a Werewolf getting intimate with a vampire was a bit... far-fetched. After all, Ashton was told that Werewolves and Vampires hated each other from the moment they were born. As if, it was genetic programming.

On top of that, unlike werewolves, the vampire did not have an active reproductive system because well... they were dead for all intents and purposes. Therefore, the thought of them conceiving a child was weird. Unless what the Mistress had been teaching him was false.

That's why Ashton had a hard time believing what Rose was telling him. However, her story got dark real quick. Her werewolf father was apparently an agent of the crown. Not of Lycania but of one of the other smaller kingdoms.

Ashton could already foresee what was about to happen. Rose's father betrayed her mother and launched a siege. However, even his father had underestimated the vampires and got obliterated.

But as Rose was the daughter of that man, she was thrown away to live on her own. No one, not even her 'mother' tried to dissuade others. Instead, she was the one who willingly abandoned her child just because she had the genes of a werewolf within herself.

"Lucifer found me then and helped me survive. Without him, I would have died a long time ago." Rose smiled wanly, "As for your question... yes. They can mate together. However, the chances of conceiving a child out of that are extremely low. But even then, it's much better than that of being bitten by three different creatures..."

"I still don't remember much, if anything at all about what happened that night." Ashton shrugged his shoulders, "Whenever I force myself to remember anything, my head feels like it would split open in half and before long, I lose consciousness."

"Interesting... The first-ever being of his kinda and yet he doesn't know the secrets of his origin... interesting indeed."

"Are there any more people like you, Rose? I mean, Vampirewolves?"

"Oh, so you already took a peek at my stats." Rose's demeanour changed back to her cheery self, "You know it's rude to peek t a lady without her consent?"

"Do you know it's a crime to kidnap someone? Pick your poison and words carefully." Ashton retorted.

Well, technically, it was kidnapping. No one knew where Ashton had disappeared to as he had not told anyone that he was leaving. All he said was he was going to be in his room. Also, given the tense atmosphere around the cottage, Ashton doubted someone would even notice that he wasn't there.

As for Rose's stats... they were extraordinary. Nothing too brilliant, but still she was more or less strong enough to take a couple of city guards by herself. She had a higher level than he did, so he couldn't see the abilities and skills Rose possessed. But he could see the rest of it including her stats.

—

Name: Rose

Species: Vampire (Inactive), Werewolf (Active).

Status: Vampirewolf

Class: Battle Mage, Assassin

Title: [Rebellious], [Conjurer], [Mystic Slayer]

Age: 29 years

Gender: female

Grade: D-tier (Evolution is possible)

Affiliation: Werewolves.

Level:

> Werewolf Level: 28

> Vampire Level: 30

Stats:

HP: 10000/10000

Damage: 57

Armour: 45

Stealth: 87

Stamina: 67

Agility: 69

Intelligence: 58

Nature:

Vigilant

<User's level is too low to view extended information.>

—

"Hm... yes. There are others like me. But I don't think they know the identity of other Vampirewolves. Oh well, looks like we'll have to continue our conversation some other time.. We have arrived." Chapter 59 - Black Market (2)

"For a 'secret' black market, isn't this place... too obvious?" Ashton mumbled as soon as they got past the gates.

"I never said it was a secret place. Everyone knows that this market exists. But only a few know what goes inside." Rose replied with a smile.

The place was crowded unlike any place, Ashton had seen previously. At the same time, it wasn't lively either which was a bit strange. No one was even looking at each other.

It almost felt as if they were a bunch of undead walking around. Not to mention, they had just stepped in and the eeriness of the place was already exceeding charts.

But the first thing that Ashton noticed was the presence of what seemed like hundreds of armed personnel. They were strong, maybe even stronger than the city guards. Which was nothing to be surprised about, considering that the black market was not affiliated with the merchant association.

So unlike them, the owners of the black market could not depend upon the security provided by the city guards. As a result, they had to hire mercenaries to protect their territory and keep it fairly quarrel free.

"Don't look at them so intently if you don't want them to kick your ass. You don't want to get banned from here as well, do you?" Rose mumbled and ushered him in.

Ashton shook his head and followed behind Rose. The Black market was the only place in Contingent he could buy and sell things now. It would be bad if he ended up doing something like what happened in the merchant's shop.

On top of that, Ashton had a feeling that these mercenaries would not be as forgiving as the merchants. Ashton had a feeling that they were the reason why everyone in the market was behaving with utmost discipline. After all, causing trouble there would be like committing suicide.

'You got that right.' Ashton heard Rose's voice but surprisingly her mouth wasn't moving.

'Telepathy?'

'Something like that. Also, it is better if we communicate like this. Much secure and undetectable form of communication.'

'Is it a Vampire ability?'

'Nope. It's an innate ability.' Rose corrected him, 'The ones having one type of gene do not have such ability, as these abilities only pop up when two different genes intermingle with each other. All hybrids have an ability exclusive of their own. However, since you're tribrid... you should have, not one but three of these abilities.'

'Three? I don't think so.' Ashton shrugged his shoulders.

As far as he knew, he only had one 'innate' ability and that was his detection skill. But the thought of having more than one such ability sure felt nice.

'Haha, innate abilities take time to manifest. It's like you have a weapon that you don't even know you have. But they'll reveal themselves at the most opportune time.' Rose chuckled, 'You can also say that these abilities are plot armours.'

'The heck is a plot armour? Is it stronger than Nemean hide armour?'

'...You'll get to know soon enough.'

Although they were surrounded by countless shops selling excellent weapons, Rose kept pushing forward. Every now and then, Ashton saw something that caught his eye, but Rose ushered him ahead.

'You know we are here to buy some stuff right?' Ashton retorted when he finally got pissed.

'We are here to get you some gear, yeah. But I never said anything about buying them.'

'Eh? Don't tell me we're going to steal!? Didn't you see those guards? I don't know about you, but I don't want to cross them.'

'What? Why would we steal? Didn't Lucifer tell you anything at all?'

'I'm afraid he didn't.'

'You know what, just go and check the price tag on those things. In the meantime, I need to have a chat with someone.'

Ashton left to do as he was told to, but before that, he turned around to see Rose was lost in her thoughts. But Ashton knew she was trying to get in touch with a certain mutual acquaintance.

"She can call Lucifer whenever she likes... interesting. Well, let's see the priceeeeeee!?" Ashton got shocked to see the price of the gears.

The gears were genuine, and so were their prices. Almost all of them were either uncommon or rare with permanent effects. But the prices of them... were a bit out of budget for him. Even the least expensive gear there had a price of 10999 blue units.

'The heck is wrong with these prices!? Are they made up of some mythical material or something?'

'Now you see why we're not here to buy anything.' Rose said as she walked up to him, 'Since the weapons are authentic, the prices are authentic as well.'

Ashton had been previously wondering why the others did not come to buy things from the black market, rather than buying shitty stuff from the merchants. The answer was clear.

While the merchants sold shitty stuff, those gears were actually affordable. Unlike the things that were sold in the black market. The weapons, materials, and potions everything in the black market was authentic and they didn't fool their customers. But these things were not affordable for most people.

'I can't buy anything here... and I was thinking I'm set for the rest of my life with the money I have.'
Ashton scratched the back of his head and stepped back, 'So, what are we going to do now?'

'We? We are not going to do anything. You are.' Suddenly an ominous smile crept on Rose's face as she said those words, 'It's time for you to show your skills, boya.'

Ashton was visibly confused. He had no idea what the hell Rose was talking about. What skills was he supposed to show? Skill to be confused all the time?

'I'm talking about your combat skills of course...'
Rose shook her head, 'Selling and buying things is not the only thing the Black Market is famous for. Its main attraction is not the things the shops have to offer, but the underground fights.'

'Wait what? I'm supposed to fight?'

'Why, you don't know how to fight?'

Ashton shook his head. That was not the point. The term underground fights itself meant that the thing was dangerous and probably illegal. He wanted to enter the academy and he didn't think anyone would be pleased to know what he had been up to.

He might even get thrown out of the academy as well! And that wasn't a risk he was willing to take.

"Relax. I got you covered." Rose put her hand into a subspace and pulled about a mask out of it, "Here, wear this. It'll hide your face and then you can use your other genes to fight. That way, your identity will remain safe. Now let's go before it's too late to get you registered."

"So I'm going to make money off of fighting?"

"Not money, nope." Rose mumbled, "Here people fight for gears. Although there are monetary rewards, I'll be taking those as convenience fees."

"Why will you take the money when I'll be the one to fight?"

"You think I'll be helping you for free, boya? Nothing's free in this world. the sooner you get used to it, the better it will be for you. Now let's go."

'And here I was thinking she is helping me in Lucifer's place.... greedy bitch.'

Chapter 60 - Brawl (1)

True to her word, Rose started acting as if she was Ashton's manager. There was no hope for Ashton to get any money out of her. Even though the money would 'rightfully' be his. However, there was one thing that Ashton liked about Rose.

Even though she showed as if she didn't care about him, she was helping him quite a bit. But then again, it could have also been because he was a golden goose for her. Thus better she took care of him, the more rewards she could later milk out of him.

Apart from all that... there was one thing Ashton was excited about. The use of the weapons. Since he could not use any weapons or armours he had gotten as a reward from the academy, it left him with one option. He would have to use the twin swords he took after defeating those bloodsuckers all those weeks ago.

It would be the first time since he would be using them. On top of that, since his identity would be hidden thanks to that mask of his, he saw no problems while using those.

'As for this mask... it's not ordinary either.' Ashton thought while touching the mask that looked like the front portion of a human skull, 'I wonder whether Rose knows about the hidden effects of the mask. If I had to guess, I would say... she doesn't. Or else she wouldn't have given it away so easily.'

Item: Mask Of Vampirism

Type: Armour/ Assassin Gear/ Enhancement Gear

> Defence: 37-45 HP per strike

> Stealth: +12 points

Stats bonus:

>> Armour: +10% while equipped for use (increases with user's level).

>> Reduces 2x damage taken from Night Creatures.

>> Reduces 1.2x damage taken from werewolves and undead.

>> Increases all stats by 10%

>> When equipped, enhance the levels of a vampire by 3 levels.

Rarity: Rare

Description:

A mask that's said to have belonged to Queen Dracula herself. It is unknown as to whose skull this mask has been carved out of, but the skull is definitely a human's. To think any human ever had powers like these was commendable. So much so that even the queen herself praised the man for his valour and efforts he made to put an end to the vampires.

Sadly, due to the shady and messy history of vampires, the identity of such a valiant man had been long lost. But one day, when the Queen wakes up again... that moment might once again reveal the identity of the human. Till then, the mask will serve its purpose and make its wielder invincible.

The weapon had been enchanted and imbued with unique abilities and effects.

Effect(s):

> Protects the wielder from negative effects of psychic attacks such as Blindness, Confusion, Dizziness, and Paralysis.

> Increases the user's mental defence by one grade (when equipped).

> Grants the user the active skill: [One With The Shadow].

Allows the user to switch places with a shadow. However, the shadow needs to be attached to a sentient being. Immediately after switching places, the user will also receive a boost in movement speed by 20% which decays over a duration of 2 minutes.

This skill can be activated 5 times a day.

Cooldown: 2 Hours

Activation Radius: 20 metres

—

'Yup. She doesn't know a thing about this mask. Good for me though.' Ashton smiled absentmindedly, 'I came here to get one gear and might end up getting two instead.'

"The heck are you smiling for?" Rose was finally finished getting Ashton in a fight and placing her bets, "Don't be a fool to think you can win this easily."

"Believe me. Underestimating my opponents is not my fighting style." Ashton had a serious look on his face, "But will it be alright? I mean I'm a vampire in the middle of a city that's filled with werewolves."

"That's what you are worried about?" Rose ended up laughing so loudly everyone around them turned towards them, "Don't worry. This Black market is a place that cared more about their shit than who enters or leaves their premises."

She continued, "In other words, it does not matter who you are as long as you buy something or entertain them in a way. So make sure your fight is an entertaining one."

Ashton nodded and they made their way towards the arena. The arena was jam-packed with people of all colours, gender, and race. Unlike the environment on the outside, there was nothing quiet about this place.

Not a single person was holding their voices back and were continuously shouting at the two fighters inside the ring. All of these people had placed bets on these fighters and none of them wanted to lose their 'hard-earned' money.

Right now, the fight between two werewolves was going on. One of them was so buffed up that Ashton thought if someone were to stab the man, he'll explode like a balloon. While the other man had a considerably smaller frame but a highly agile body which was enough to ensure none of the bulky man's punches connected to him.

But the small man's punches were more or less useless against the big guy. Thus forcing the two of them into a stalemate. That was also the reason why the crowd was getting all riled up. They were there to get their money, not to witness their unnecessarily long fight.

Ashton fight was going to take place after a couple of fights. Which was good, considering that will give him enough time to get himself acquainted with how they fought with one another and analyse their movement. All in all, everything was going fine.

"Pretty wild isn't it?" Rose had to literally shout while sitting next to Ashton and yet he could barely hear her. But when that didn't work, they once again started communicating using telepathy.

"Wild doesn't even come close to describing this place. How the hell did we not hear any of this while we were outside?"

"These are no ordinary walls, boya. They have been made by the crystals found in night creatures and have noise cancellation properties. Some one could make an explosion happen here, and the building would give out before any kind of sound would escape this place."

"I can't wonder why they would do something like this," Ashton said with a sarcastic look on his face.

There were two reasons why they would do that. Both of which Ashton was well aware of. Firstly, the noise would make sure that anybody who doesn't already know about the underground fight circuit, will never come to know about it on their own. Unless someone invited them over, as Rose invited him.

The second and final reason was to make sure that the business going above them was not inconvenienced in any form. It appeared that the mysterious owners of the place knew how to keep business and pleasure separate.

While Ashton was thinking all that, the excruciatingly long fight finally came to an end with the short guy taking the win. it would seem that no matter how bulky someone becomes... their balls are always susceptible to 'unintentional' low blows. Once the big guy was on his knees it was only a matter of time before the shorter guy ended the match.

"Are such moves allowed?"

"Anything is allowed once you're inside the ring. As long as you do not kill somebody." Rose replied with a wink, "Even sexual advances are not forbidden so might need to be aware of it."

"I'm fighting a woman?"

"Not just any woman, but an alpha amongst the brawlers. She had never been defeated in a match before. All thanks to her charm. But since you could resist me, who knows you might become the first one to defeat her and if you're able to do that, you can take any... rare grade weapon from the shops. So be sure to give it your best."

"So that's why you tested me back then. You wanted to see whether I was up for the challenge or not." Ashton had a moment of realisation before shaking his head, "All that aside, do you know anything else about the woman?"

"Nope. That's the point. No one knows who she is or where she came from. It's all shrouded in mystery. Even the information brokers don't have any on her. It's as if she's a ghost."

"A ghost you say.... interesting."