

## **Zompiewolf 511**

### Chapter 511 A Mother's Blessing (1)

The next day, a recruitment notice was published around various mercenary organisations. Ghosts were interested in expanding their forces and were looking for suitable personnel for the job.

However, the job wasn't limited to combat class. People from all backgrounds and classes were encouraged to send their resumes to ONI.

After all, Ashton owned the intelligence org; at the time, they were the only ones with enough staffing to take care of the recruitment.

Obviously, ONI would only sort the weed out from the rest. The final recruitment would happen when Ashton returned to Kernel Tower.

The recruitment notice sent waves through the Tower. Hundreds of applications were received as soon as the notification went live. Not only did the small-time crews apply for the job, even big names from Gold Water sent their resumes in hopes of getting selected.

From warriors to accountants, Ghosts were willing to recruit anyone as long as they were decent at their job.

The response was also strong because no recruitment limit was mentioned in the notification. This meant the Ghost could hire anywhere from one to a thousand people!

Albeit, only some people who applied were interested in becoming a Ghost. Most wanted to enjoy the fame and benefits of being associated with them.

Otiga was already aware of such greedy bastards; that's why the recruitment wasn't a one-step process but involved a series of tests, including a morality test. Which was weird, considering they were hiring mercenaries.

As the Head of ONI, it was her job to ensure only deserving candidates reached the final round, which was sparring with present Ghost members. Only those who proved their mantle against the current members could join them.

However, mercenaries weren't the only ones interested in Ashton. After the news of the undead attack reached the Giholo homeworld, they immediately dispatched over a hundred cruisers headed for Earth.

Their living god had been threatened again, and they would not sit quietly this time. The spacefarers had recognised Earth as a sister planet, which meant the Earth had been officially recognised as a second home for the Giholos.

It should deter hostile outworlders from recklessly attacking the planet in the future. If someone still dared to eye them, they'd have to face the full might of the Giholos.

Something similar happened with opportunistic merchants and financial organisations. Thanks to Otiga's excellent diplomatic relations and story-telling skills, everyone wanted to invest in Earth early to cement their relationship with Reaper.

[Damn, your feats are getting more impressive with each passing moment!]

Ashton only smiled while reading Otiga's report. If everything went according to plan, Earth would be included in the galactic trade route within two to three years.

The only thing remaining was to deal with the planet dwellers. Vampires had already given their approval to Ashton's plans. The werewolves, well, none of them would question him either way. As for the undead, the opinions of the dead don't matter to him either way.

"At the pace, we are moving, taking down the Xyrans doesn't seem impossible anymore," Ashton remarked, closing the report and heading outside.

While strolling around the city, he couldn't help but remember the state Livan had been in a few years ago. Broken buildings, malnourished residents, poverty, constant invasions... there were problems all around them.

But now, Livan was the city ushering Earth into its next evolutionary stage. It had become a beacon of hope and progress.

In a way, Ashton viewed the city as himself. After all, just like Livan, he had grown from a scrawny kid to a somewhat presentable man with a few accomplishments.

[You fucker, stop behaving like an old man! I'm the oldie here!]

'You just had to open your mouth, didn't you?'

[Where are you headed either way?]

'The Arena.'

The arena was precisely what one would think. A colosseum designed for entertainment had finally found a good use. While recruiting proper mercs into the faction would take time, the recruitment for earthlings had already begun.

Humans, werewolves, vampires, and Giholos, whoever wished to become a Ghost was welcome to participate. They were put through a series of tests, and Ashton's lieutenants tested only those who didn't quit till the end.

Today was the final test day for the first batch of recruits. Though Ricochet wanted to participate as one of his lieutenants, Ashton instructed him and other metahumans to take a break.

Although they didn't react to the news of their homeworld, Occuna, being destroyed, they couldn't hide their grief from Ashton's observant eyes.

There was a saying, 'A mercenary was always prepared to give up their life', but things were not so easy regarding their family and friends.

Ashton knew it first-hand after what happened with his father. His entire life, he thought he had made peace with the fact of his parents' deaths. But in reality, he hadn't. One could say it was the reason for his apathy towards the Occunians.

Still, when Ashton arrived at the arena, some metahumans were waiting to ask for his permission to test the recruits.

"Drop the act, go home and rest. I'll call you when I need you." Ashton reminded the Occunians as they left, smiling wanly.

"Never thought I would get to see the human side of you after all these years," Mera remarked.

"I'm surprised myself," Ashton coldly replied, "After all, you tried your best to make me inhumane like yourself."

The resentment in Ashton's voice was evident. It seemed Ashton wouldn't forgive Mera because fate wanted them to work together.

πανδα Ἰ?vêl(còm) Mera also knew she didn't deserve forgiveness after everything she had done. However, she hoped that someday things would be different.

"Vimur has shortlisted a few humans based on their combat capabilities," Mera said, pushing a list into Ashton's hand, "He wants you to check if you want to alter it before preparing them for the next round."

"Alright," Ashton replied, walking away, but Mera called for him.

"Wait up," Mera sighed in defeat, "That healer of yours, Laihud, he mentioned wanting to discuss something regarding Avalina's state."

Ashton nodded and left without a word, heading towards the hospital. Mera could only gaze at his fading silhouette, hoping she could somehow change the past.

Chapter 512 A Mother's Blessing (2)

"Ah, you're here," Laihud mumbled, ushering him inside, "Here, we need to talk."

The vibe around the hospital was pleasant. Everyone was happy with the advanced treatment they were receiving, thanks to Laihud. However, the room they entered was drastically different.

A mother laid unconscious right in front of her son's eyes. Despite being comatose, Avalina's body showed no signs of failure, thanks to her being a vampire.

Laihud's urgent summon was the only reason why Ashton got worried about her. But Laihud may have wanted to talk about something else.

"I hope everything's alright?" Ashton inquired.

"Yes," Laihud smiled, handing him a tablet, "things are much better than 'alright'."

Ashton stared at the tablet, failing to notice what he was supposed to look at. The tablet carried the patient's information, in this case, Avalina's, and the device could also predict the patient's stats and other differential intel.

At that moment, Ashton realised what he was supposed to look for, and what he discovered surprised him. Avalina wasn't unconscious because of some drug, but because she was evolving!

"How is this-"

"I did some research on vampires, although I'm not certain due to time restrictions, it would seem traumatic experiences can trigger their evolutionary stages." Laihud explained, "The shock of losing her husband might have forced her to evolve."

The situation was unlike everything Ashton had in his mind. Avalina's evolution was welcoming news, and it was the conditions associated with the evolution that bothered him.

'Asta, can you-'

[No idea, bub. Evolution and unpredictability always go hand in hand. Though I can say certainty, emotions affect a creature's growth in some way, shape or form. Take yourself, for example.]

Now that Astaroth mentioned it, Ashton could make sense of his words. His classes, at least the original ones, reflected his thoughts and emotions.

[Revenger] class was born out of his passion for revenge, while [Bloodmage] could result from his bloodlust. His necromancy powers reflected his lack of allies during his early years.

It was odd how everything suddenly made sense when Ashton had assumed class generation was completely randomised. But the revelation also worried him.

Moments before collapsing, Avalina's emotions and thoughts were all over the place. Her disgruntled phase could sabotage her evolution which might turn her into some abomination... like Johnathan in his final moments.

"Keep an eye on her. Meanwhile, I'll increase the security around here."

"A wise move, considering your mother's state-"

"It's not to protect her from assailants but to protect everyone else from her."

Ashton's words left Laihud perplexed. Why would they need protection from her? After all, from what he had heard about Avalina, she was a great leader and a loving soul who cared about those around her, no matter who they were.

Yet Ashton's strange instructions contradicted everything Laihud knew about Avalina. Why would someone of such great character turn into a psycho, like Ashton was expecting?



"If it puts your mind at ease, I won't stop you." Laihud relented, "If you need any help or anyone to talk to, I'm here."

Ashton smiled while patting Laihud on the back. Just when he was about to leave, his [Perception] screamed for him to dive out. Instead of following through, Ashton grabbed Laihud and shoved him out of the room.

Before Laihud could ask what was happening, Ashton slammed the door shut. Without wasting a heartbeat, Laihud rushed out of the hospital towards the arena. Though he wasn't sure what had happened, the odd look on Ashton's face had Laihud concerned for the captain's well-being.

"Hold on, Reaper! I'll be back with support!"

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Meanwhile, inside the room...

Even with all this strength, Ashton was having a tough time restraining Avalina, and her vampiric tendencies had skyrocketed. Never had Ashton seen a more thirsty vampire like his mother at that moment.

When Ashton's [Preception] warned him, he knew what would happen next. Although Avalina's maternal instinct would not let her harm him, Laihud was fair game. That's why instead of saving himself, Ashton pushed Laihud to safety.

However, containing a recently evolved vampire was no joke. As if that wasn't enough, Avalina had not consumed blood for days, which had made her even more hostile.

Even in such a condition, she never tried to bite Ashton. Overwhelming hunger was churning her insides, yet motherhood overpowered her thirst.

"Damn it! Calm down already!" Ashton yelled while trying his best to get her under control.

Despite his best efforts, it didn't seem like Avalina was going to stop as she kept lunging towards the doors.

One could imagine how difficult it was to keep her under control as Avalina didn't give Ashton enough time to summon someone to aid him. She was possessed.

[Choke her!]

'She's a vampire, dumbass!' Ashton gritted his teeth, 'They don't need to breathe!'

Having no other way, Ashton grabbed Avalina and jumped out of the window, hoping the sudden shock would snap her back, albeit momentarily.

They both crashed on the ground as a huge dust cloud erupted. Although Ashton had used his body to cushion the blow for Avalina, she was hurt a bit. In a fit of rage and pain, Avalina began flailing her arms around.

Another reason why Ashton pushed Avalina outside was the sun. Although the rays were not strong enough to harm her, the beams were sufficient to slow her down considerably.

Before Avalina could get away, Ashton tore through the dust cloud, latching onto his mother's back. He wrapped his legs around her waist while his free arm grabbed its neck before pinning her to the ground again.

It was Ashton's half-assed attempt to lock Avalina in a rare-naked choke. Once locked in, a rear-naked choke usually stops the blood flow to the brain, and a person could go to sleep in just a few seconds. But this was a vampire, not a human or any 'living' creature.

Instead, Ashton hoped his weight would be enough to stop Avalina from charging at random onlookers. By this time, the number of spectators had increased significantly, and if Ashton couldn't stop her, the results would be devastating.

Everyone wanted to know what was happening, and even Ashton had no clue how to stop Avalina from killing someone. Just then, blood splattered all over Avalina's face.

As soon as Avalina tasted the blood, she immediately calmed down. Just then, Ashton turned to see who helped him, only to see Mera standing there with more blood packs.

### Chapter 513 A Mother's Blessing (3)

Sometime later, having had her fill, Avalina calmed down. While she was embarrassed for her actions, no one blamed her. After all, she had no control over herself after the sudden evolution.

Ashton was by her side the entire time. It was during this time something weird happened. While Avalina was chugging blood, she suddenly threw it all up.

A vampire throwing up blood was unheard of, as unlike humans, while a vampire could 'satisfy' their hunger, they could never fill their bottomless stomach. Keeping these reasons in mind, everyone knew something was off.

Without wasting a heartbeat, Ashton checked Avalina's stats and low and behold; the reason was flashing brightly.

Avalina had undergone some sort of double evolution. At least, that's what Ashton assumed.

[She turned into an 'Insane Vampire' at first, but as soon as she had fill, she evolved into something else? This is the first time I have seen something like this.]

'Psi-Vampire, short for psychic vampire.' Ashton got lost in his thoughts, 'A type of vampire not dependant on blood but on the prey's emotions. I have only heard about it from Dracula, but even he wasn't sure anyone could evolve into one on their own.'

An Insane Vampire was akin to the berserk form of a werewolf. In their respective conditions, both creatures lose all reason and rationality, and they only care about filling their belly or, in some cases, taking a target's life.

[If you think about it, it makes sense your mother's evolution was influenced by her mental strength.]

Ashton silently agreed. She had gone through a lot in her life, and maybe this evolution was her body's way of safeguarding her from further detriment.

After taking samples and administering some tests, Laihud left the room, urging everyone to do the same. Even dull-headed Vimur knew what Laihud meant and dragged everyone out of there except Ashton.

Avalina wrapped her arms around her son as soon as they were alone. Ashton did not utter a word and kept caressing her head. Not wanting to break down in everybody's presence, Avalina stayed strong but couldn't do it any longer.

No tears came out of her eyes, but she cried her heart out. Remembering every moment she spent with Jonathan and kept mumbling incoherent things through periodic gasps.

Ashton wasn't unaffected either, as he sniffled quietly, tears threatening to spill from his eyes. But for his mother's sake, he had to stay strong.

'Just a bit longer, mom... just a bit longer.'

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After a while, Avalina calmed down enough to converse. Ashton did his best to run her through everything following his return from Nirvana about a month ago.

At first, Avalina was surprised she had been unconscious for so long. But then she was relieved to know Ashton's progress in such a short time. Not only he took care of the problem brewing in Contingency, but he also defended the region from invaders.

Avalina couldn't have been more proud of her son's efforts even if she had tried. Once she felt good enough, Ashton introduced her to the rest of his crew. Vimur's goofiness and Laihud's sarcastic remarks to him made her forget all about her pain.

Soon, it was night, and everyone parted ways for the night. Ashton and Anna decided to stay back with Avalina despite her protests. They were just as stubborn as she was in her youth.

While chatting, Ashton received an urgent call and left to take care of it for a while, leaving the ladies to themselves.

"Nonsense, you look better than me!" Anna chuckled.

"I'm a vampire. It's obvious I'll look youthful for the rest of my life," Avalina replied, laughing alongside.

"If you don't mind, can I ask you something?"

"Anything, dear."

Anna took a deep breath, hoping her words didn't sting her. Upsetting Ashton's mom was the last thing on her mind.

"Ashton talks a lot about you but not about your husband." Anna sheepishly mumbled, "I was hoping you could tell me more about him and Ashton, only if you're comfortable with it!"

As soon as those words came out of Anna's lips, the smile on Avalina's face disappeared. Anna panicked, thinking she fucked up big time. Just then, Avalina beamed again.

The time she spent with Johnathan was some of the best moments of her life, and reminiscing about it brought her a lot of joy.

"Ashton was quite young when we separated, and I would be surprised if he remembered anything from our time in the Enclosure or before it." She mumbled, trying to remember more, "Though it's safe to say he was just as troublesome as he is now."

Anna agreed with a smile. Sometimes Ashton does move on a whim, which is annoying. But then again, those little things made Anna fall for him in the first place.

"I know how you feel about him," Avalina remarked as soon as she noticed the slightly red hue on Anna's face, "After all, I feel for Johnathan's goofiness as well. As for his past before meeting me... I don't know much about it."

She continued, "Johnathan always had been enigmatic. As far as I know, he was an orphan and didn't remember much about his family. Though sometimes, in his sleep, he talked gibberish.

"I say gibberish because I never understood what he said, but I'm sure it was some language. Maybe such an observation was the product of my overthinking. Who knows, maybe I'm correct."

Anna rested her chin on her hand as Avalina told her about the littlest things Johnathan did for her. The more she remembered, the cheery she got.

"Other than that, Johnathan was a great man, husband and most of all, a great father who always put Ashton before anyone else. A man every woman would love to have by her side. As for you..."

Avalina playfully flicked Anna's forehead, "I'm confident you'll feel the same... with Ashton."

"I..." Anna was suddenly too embarrassed to say anything.

"No matter what, you'll always have my blessings."



Little did they know, Ashton had been standing outside the room for quite a while. Listening to them and remembering Johnathan. Chapter 514 It's Time...

"Approaching the target, ETA twenty minutes." Kass's voice boomed over the radio.

Instead of waiting for Avalina's recovery before attacking Nirvana, Ashton moved forward with the plan as soon as the majority of Giholan forces arrived to assist him.

Thanks to their transport ships, an army of roughly three thousand soldiers were headed to attack Nirvana.

'It would have been an overkill if I attacked them alone,' He thought, 'But now... it's going to be a massacre.'

[Honestly speaking, I lowkey feel bad for them. They unknowingly made an enemy out of the worst person they possibly could. Well, no point crying over spilt milk.]

Oddly enough, Astaroth's words gave a sense of comfort to Ashton. Even though he was dead set on taking revenge, he often found himself second-guessing whether or not it was correct to make the innocent pay for the mistakes of a few.

However, such thoughts would only occupy his mind briefly before being thrown away. The topic of their innocence would come after their defeat, not before.

'For their sake, I hope they'd surrender.'

Unfortunately, that didn't seem to be the case. The soaring ships came to a screeching halt. They hadn't reached the target; Ashton was sure of that much. So why did Kass stop them?

"Captain, I might need some assistance here," Kass reported through the comms.

"I'll be right there," Ashton replied before heading to the cockpit.

As soon as he stepped into the glass dome, everything became clear. A massive gaseous crown surrounded their target city. Similarly, every central town and district had been covered with Corpsification gas as a security measure.

"Huh, these fuckers..." Ashton couldn't help but smile, "Looks like I'll have to personally take care of them after all."

Ashton called the rest of the ships awaiting his orders at different places around Nirvana with a sinister expression. Their plans had been altered a teensy bit.

"Dock the ships in the atmosphere, and do not make contact with the black smoke." He calmly spoke through the radio, "I repeat, do not make contact with the smoke. If you're feeling itchy to do something, feel free to bombard the cities from above."

A moment later, all twenty ships' pilots followed his instructions. As much as the inhumans\* wanted to take revenge on the undead for experimenting on them, there wasn't anything they could have done.

Ashton was well aware of how they felt and had special instructions for them.

"Oj, Alina and the rest of the inhumans, prepare your weapons," Ashton mumbled as soon as he got back, "You'll back me up."

To say the Inhumans were confused would be an understatement. Perhaps Ashton didn't know they do not possess resistance against corpification gas like him?

However, instead of conveying their thoughts, they immediately readied themselves along with Vimur and the rest of Ashton's crew. While they won't be entering the gaseous dome, they'll play a crucial role.

"I'm confident they'll run out of there once they realise their godly dome will lead them to doom. That's where all of you come in," Ashton smirked, "It'll be your job to kill anyone escaping."

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"Ha! As expected, those fools can't even touch us now!" One of the undead generals exclaimed.

It had been a while since the undead had forgotten the taste of fear. But once they heard about the ships rapidly approaching, they got to experience it again.

Until the final moment, they weren't sure whether the corpification gas could scare the enemies, but after observing the enemy movements, they could finally eliminate their anxieties.

The President was present there as well. Sadly, none of his children stood by his side to reassure him. Some had left to explore space, while those who stayed behind had no interest in the war.

Thankfully, the plan was working, or else it would have been the end of Nirvana. While they were busy celebrating, they received a disturbing transmission.

It was a voice they hadn't heard before, and the President's intuition was screaming at him... the battle had just begun.

"Death... is a wonderful thing, don't you think?" The man spoke as he casually walked through the smoke.

Without sparing a second, the undead lit up the man from both sides. From cannons to missiles to even plasma weapons, the undead threw everything they could to stop the man from getting closer.

Huge dust clouds shrouded the man, but the undead kept firing at his silhouette. Fear ran rampant among the soldiers.

The President was stunned into silence. Only the undead could breathe and survive in the gas. But why did one of their own betray them? That wasn't the only question in his head.

Despite his best efforts, the President couldn't find a way to explain the absurd power the man before them was displaying. Undead or not, how could someone possibly attain such strength?

"It all... makes sense now." The President mumbled, "He's the one. It wasn't an army that took down Phantom. It wasn't an organisation that destroyed our facilities... It was him..."

Fighting the mysterious man was of no use. They had to flee now! He immediately issued the order, and countless people tried to escape the dome. Only to find inhumans standing outside, ready to hunt them down like chickens.

The undead had no escape, just like the man had sworn after destroying Tartarus. The Reaper was onto them to collect the debt of their crimes.

As if the situation wasn't dire enough before, things took a turn for the worse. Something weird happened when the undead stopped firing on Ashton, and the dust clouds settled down.

"How is this possible!?" The President mumbled in disbelief.

Although he had expected the attack not to work against the man, he didn't expect him to be completely unscathed. But an even stranger thing was... the man wasn't alone anymore.

Over a thousand creatures materialised out of thin air, standing behind the man like his loyal subjects.

"It's time..." The man mumbled, and the shadowy figures charged at the undead, killing hundreds in mere seconds.

#### Chapter 515 You Never Had A Chance (1)

Thousands of undead fought bravely to defeat the enemy; at least the President would have desired a result along those terms. But the reality is often disappointing.

Despite having five times more soldiers than the enemy, the President's forces were nothing more than playthings for Ashton. While his forces were getting slaughtered, the President attempted to get a grip on Ashton's emotions.

Manipulating others was one of his most remarkable abilities. However, Ashton's poker face had him surprised. The President could alter their personality if the opponent showed emotion before him, and he hoped that that ability would get him out of the shitty situation.

However, things were not meant to go his way at all.

"What's wrong with that bastard!?" The President gritted his teeth in frustration.

During previous meetings, it was widely accepted that the assailants were not acting out of malice but for revenge or a twisted sense of duty. It was apparent from what the President's brainwashed daughter admitted.

The President welcomed this information as anger and pride were two emotions he had found easier to manipulate. It was also why, despite being urged not to, the President headed for the battlefield in the first place.

The President believed the situation would be under his control as long as he could manipulate the enemy leader. Unfortunately, he did not know about Ashton's [Detection] skill.

The Reaper had already made his move before the President knew who his enemy was. But even if the President had tried manipulating Ashton, it would not accomplish anything, as Ashton's conscience wasn't the only one in his head.

παντα ἴψὲ | (còm) No matter how long and hard the President thought, he could not devise a plan to subdue the enemy. The only option left was to...

'Flee.'

Ashton calmly walked in his direction, which scared the shit out of the President. Not wanting Ashton to get any closer, the President morphed himself into a shadowy bird and made a break for it.

But unlike his soldiers, he didn't rush outside the safety of Corpsification gas, but deeper inside, towards the cities.

"Fucking hell," Ashton sighed as massive wings popped out of his back, "If you're going to die anyway, then die without making a fuss. I'm going after him; join me after finishing up here."

His summons replied positively before resuming their feast.

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At the same time, on the other side of Nirvana, an aerial battle broke out. It was unlike any earthling had seen before. After all, it wasn't every day when spaceships clashed with each other on a backward planet like earth.

It would seem the undead were preparing to use their own battle frigates to aid the President's side. However, before they could make that move, Kass space-jumped to their coordinates to engage them.

Doing a space jump under a planet's atmosphere was unheard of and a dangerous manoeuvre. Even the Giholans were in awe of Kass's expertise and skills for managing to pull it off so effortlessly.

But the dark elf's skills were not limited to manoeuvrability. Whenever she piloted a ship, it became her natural part. Within moments the sky turned red from the explosives she shot.

Although the undead had spaceships, they were outdated models which they bought at low prices.

For earth, those ships were still quite advanced. Therefore, they never thought of upgrading to newer prototypes. After all, how were they supposed to know someday they'd indulge in a dogfight against one of the most advanced ships in the entire galaxy?



"EAT THIS, MORONS!" Kass explained while spamming hundreds of commands across dozens of screens.

It was the first time Ashton had given her complete freedom to do as she pleased, and Kass didn't hesitate to make the best use of his approval.

As the battle occurred right outside the gas dome, Kass's attacks directly affected those below them. Whenever an enemy ship was shot down, it resulted in massive explosions, killing hundreds and maiming thousands.

The Giholan ships followed suit and began bombarding enemy bases, preventing any aid from reaching the enemies on the battlefield.

As for the battlefield, Ashton had just left. Well, the undead there had no choice but to retreat. Not only were the summons unnaturally strong, but they immediately regenerated whenever the undead finally managed to kill someone.

At that point, it was foolish to continue fighting. The undead intended to surrender, but sadly, the enemies were uninterested in taking prisoners. Running away was their only choice.

Unfortunately, they were shortly deprived of their last option.

"Running away without giving me a kiss?"

Celeste excitedly licked her lips as hundreds of shadowy tentacles erupted from the ground, wrapping around the undead.

Seizing the moment, Gokung spewed hellish flame, turning the undead into spoiled steak. Dolos and his minions were also quick at work, picking off surviving enemies.

"Oi, Atlas wanna do something fun?" Dolos mischievously grinned.

"What do you want now?" Atlas grumbled in annoyance.

"Throw me at them!" Dolos replied, rushing over to the giant.

Atlas only smiled, reeled back a fist and got into position. The next moment, Dolos jumped, and Atlas simultaneously launched his fist with full power, sending the tyrant flying across the battlefield.

"YOLO!" Dolos went screaming over the terrified undead army before crashing into them.

"Ah, that looks so much fun!" Celeste commented, "Punch me next, aigo!"

"Is this some sort of a joke?"

Sven immediately interrupted the two. Raven had been observing them from a distance and nodded in agreement with Sven.

"As expected for master's first servant," he commented, "Sven is the most responsible one amongst us- WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING!?"

It seemed Raven's observation about Sven was widely inaccurate. Instead of stopping the lunacy before things went haywire, Sven approached them to set a queue!

"Since I was the master's first servant, it is my right to be thrown first." Sven proudly announced, "O, the great beast of the savage land, pick me up and let me tame the winds!"

"Not fair, Sven!" Celeste pouted, stomping her foot.

"Lunatics surround me," Raven sighed, "Oi, Gokung, throw me as well!"

Chapter 516 You Never Had A Chance (2)

The battle inside the dome was still getting hotter with each passing moment, but the feral chaos on the outside finally began to die down.

Unlike Ashton's summons, Anna was forgiving towards the undead and allowed those who surrendered to live. While she took a break, the Inhumans and the Metahumans were busy restraining them.

At first, Alina and her team wanted nothing more than to rip and torture the undead endlessly. But Viper put them in their place. In Ashton's absence, Anna was their leader. Thus, her commands were absolute and were to be followed to the T.

That said, Ashton had instructed them to kill anyone who stepped out of the dome, and Viper did not want to upset Ashton or Anna. As such, he decided to clear things up before making a mistake.

"We did as you told, lady Anna. But I'm afraid the lord would've wanted them dead," Viper asked her while wiping off the bloodstain on his face, "Should we-"

Before Viper could continue, Anna raised a finger, gesturing for him to wait. Standing next to a pile of corpses, she summoned a flame spirit to rid of the corpse before they spread some disease.

If it had been a living race, Anna would have absorbed their life force to get stronger instead of burning them. Unfortunately, the undead and vampires were useless to her in those terms.

"You were saying?" Anna calmly inquired.

Her beauty was amplified even more in the red hue of the cackling flames. Countless admirers kept gazing in her direction. Even the undead couldn't help but feel their long-lost desire for love resurface again. Even on their death bed, their dormant primal need had been awakened.

"I'm afraid Ashton's vision has been clouded by revenge," Anna replied, "If we want to take over Nirvana, we would need undead on our side. At least a few of them. Do you think the undead would allow us to rule over them peacefully after mercilessly slaughtering their family?"

Viper nodded. If the lord desired to rebuild the rotten city under his image, he would need support from the undead, and whether he was happy with it or not was an entirely different matter.

"As for Ashton, don't worry. I'll reason with him."

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"P-Please! Just hear me out once!" The President begged with pleading eyes.

However, Ashton's eyes didn't have a tinge of mercy in them. The undead had no dependence on air, but since they were fighting inside the dome, they often gasped to consume the corpsification gas.

The President was doing the same thing. However, his ragged breathing style wasn't helpful in the least. On top of that, he wasn't in good shape physically.

His left arm and right eye had been torn away by Ashton as some sadistic torture. At the same time, his legs had been shattered to pieces, with shards of bone rupturing through the skin.

The President begged and pleaded. Screaming that he couldn't feel any pain, hoping it would deter Ashton's onslaught. But it seemed the predator did not care whether his prey could feel pain or not. He was solely messing him up for the sake of it.

Ashton's behaviour scared the President even more. He slowly turned around to witness the everlasting nothingness behind him. Roughly a minute ago, a military base existed there, but now only its ruins remained.

With a swing of his arm, dark clouds emerged out of nowhere. First, everyone thought it was some advanced corpification gas form. But their expressions turned sour when the clouds rained hellfire over the military base.

People rushed inside the building, hoping it would shelter them from the disastrous downpour. But nothing and no one was safe under the [Scorching Rain]. The building itself fell apart, and not even the underground base remained untouched by the calamity.

πανδα Ἰ?vê | (còm) However, Ashton saved the President from dying. The undead was confused at first. But now he realised why the enemy saved him from a quick death.

Despite not ending the President's miserable life, Ashton ensured the bastard learned the full extent of his strength. To feel the despair, he felt after having to kill his father.

"1,231,117, that's how many people you killed in your lust for power and prosperity." Ashton coldly whispered, "That's also how many time's I'll kill you before 'killing' you."

"No... NO... PLEASE!" The President begged again, but all his pleading fell on dead ears.

Even though he didn't know what Ashton meant, from what the President had seen so far, it couldn't have been anything remotely pleasant.

Ashton chuckled. Seeing an undead being afraid of death was quite amusing. But the President wasn't going to remain undead for long.

For once, Ashton wanted to toy with him more, but Astaroth intervened again.

[End it now, Ashton. You can kill him as many times as you want later.]

Ashton quietly nodded. The entire situation was getting a bit too sadistic, even to his taste. Without any further delay, he summoned Raphael.

Initially, he wanted to subject the President to the same punishment as Phantom. However, he decided against it at that moment. The bastard deserved to die by his hands, slowly and painfully.

'Raphael can manipulate time in his domain, right?' Ashton asked Astaroth.

[Affirmative.]

"Good," he mumbled before sealing the President inside the domain.

"What is... this place..." The President grumbled absentmindedly.

But instead of replying, Ashton removed a phial from his inventory and forced its content down the captive's throat. The President tried his best to resist but suddenly became entangled with black restraints, wasting his efforts.

Coming to terms with his final moments, the President shot a dirty look of defiance towards Ashton, who promptly slapped him. At that moment, he felt pain in his cheek, where Ashton slapped him.

It was then a sickly realisation dawned upon the 'undead'. The vial he was forced to consume... it was the 'cure'. At that moment, the undead leader lost his identity and slowly transformed into a 'primitive' being, as he used to call humans.

The President stared at Ashton in horror and disbelief, who smiled at him and said, "Welcome to the world of the living."

Chapter 517 You Never Had A Chance (3)

After dealing with the President, there wasn't much Ashton had to do except one thing. Corpsification gas was running rampant in the atmosphere. As such, most of his forces couldn't enter the cities.

Moreover, the barrier encasing the gas could disappear at any moment. If that were to happen, tons of smoke would escape into the environment. Ashton didn't even want to imagine the catastrophic results of such a disaster.



While he could release the cure in the air, just like He had done in Contingency, it would lead to the annihilation of the undead altogether. Despite his rage, the logical side of his mind refused to commit genocide on such a scale.

"Bismark," Ashton called for the lich, "Gather everyone and consume as much smoke as possible in fifteen minutes."

Thankfully, Ashton had his undead to support him. Consuming the gas would permanently increase their stats by leaps and bounds.

Now that he had dealt with everything on earth, he could focus solely on strengthening his soldiers. With a bounty on his head, it was the only logical move to make.

As for the fifteen-minute time limit, Ashton couldn't allow his summons to gobble everything and had to get stronger himself. Besides, since he couldn't level up before evolving, this was an excellent opportunity to raise his stats. As such, wasting all the smoke on the summons was irrational.

"I'll get right to it," Bismark commented before gliding away.

Seeing Bismark comply so quickly when it came to gaining strength was funny. But it wasn't surprising, considering the fucker sold his soul in exchange for more power.

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In roughly an hour, the undead skies were clear of any 'toxic substance'. Just like that, the final wall of defence was down, sending the undead cabinet into a frenzy.

The citizens were panic-stricken. Uncertainty related to one's life always tends to have that sort of effect. It would seem the undead populous had not been informed about their impending doom. Thus, they panicked when they saw Ashton and his forces entering their cities.

They waited for the army to push them back, but unfortunately for them, as for the last hour, the military no longer existed. They were on their own. However, they were just ordinary citizens and couldn't do much against the invaders.

However, they couldn't contain their excitement when the humans learned about the 'invasion'. Out of the three dominant civilisations, the humans living amongst the undead had it worst.

While the cities were being invaded, unbeknownst to everyone, Raven slipped into the cabinet building, assassinating the pro-President regime. It was the compromise Anna had to make for Ashton to spare the undead soldiers.

The choice between hundreds of innocent soldiers and a dozen corrupt leaders was an easy one to make. Either way, if Ashton wanted to make a stable government under his image, he had to replace the existing cabinet. Therefore, killing them off was like killing two birds with a stone.

"Inform her to make the announcement now while everything's under control," Ashton mumbled.

Viper immediately left to fetch the President's daughter, who was still under Ashton's influence. The President's evil deeds would now witness the light of the day before Ashton delivered his judgement to the 'former' President.

"Citizens of Nirvana, today marks the day the old regime ends for the better," Hana's voice boomed through every square and county of Nirvana, "Today marks the rise of a new era! A time of prosperity for all, humans and undead alike."

Draped in a white robe, Hana looked enchanting. The next leader needed to look good while addressing the nation, and her simple yet elegant attire would resonate with the announcement she was about to deliver.

"I'm aware of the emotional turmoil, the uncertainty you're feeling, but today I stand here to ensure everyone this is not the end, but a new beginning."

The citizens were confused but kept listening as Hana addressed them. After all, she was the only source of information they had in the time of bewilderment.

"My father, the former President," Hana ensured to emphasise 'former' before continuing, "was not the leader his regime had portrayed him to be. He was a cruel ruler who only cared about his benefit and waged unwanted wars on other species.

"But he didn't stop there. Unknown to you, the people he and his close allies constructed over a dozen research facilities. But it was nothing more than a prison for both the undead and the humans."

Standing behind Hana, Ashton kept an eye on public reaction, only to see the gasps and shocked expressions he had expected. The citizens of Nirvana weren't a troublesome lot, as both he and Anna had realised while living there.

The problem was the President and his lackeys. Now that they were gone, the undead could be reformed... with a choice.

"They killed incessantly, without morals or reason. That was the point I decided to undo their doing. I tried my best to stop them, but I was imprisoned and tortured instead. My own father ripped off my fingers!"

Hana paraded her injured hand around for the cameras to capture. In reality, she did it herself under Ashton's orders to gain sympathy from the citizens and portray the President as a demented soul.

She continued pointing towards Ashton, "Had it not been for the goodwill of Mr Reaper and his benevolent crew, only lord Frankenstein knows what my father might have done to our beautiful nation and all of you."

At that moment, the crowd realised what had happened. They weren't being invaded, but instead, Hana instigated a coup to stop her father.

Just like that, all the animosity the people had for Ashton, and the 'invaders' disappeared. They weren't their enemies but saviours! Who knows what that deranged President might have done to them if it hadn't been for Hana and Reaper?

The gullible people began chanting both Hana's and Reaper's names, engraving their 'sacrifices' to their hearts. And so, an invasion had been framed as a struggle for freedom instead.

'These morons never had a chance against us,' Ashton smiled behind his mask, 'No wonder they never doubted the President... well, the more foolish they are, the better it is for me.'

#### Chapter 518 Game Of Pawns

Ashton was nothing less than a hero for Nirvana. Having Hana help set up the stage, it was his turn to continue fuelling the public's rage. When Hana gave him the cue, he walked up to the podium and took his mask off, to everyone's surprise, before quietly activating the [Incite] skill.

"Today, I stand before you, not as your saviour or messiah, but as a son. The son of a man brutally tortured into insanity by none other than the cunning President."

He continued, "At that moment, I decided to dedicate my life to fighting the President and his goons. To ensure no other son would ever have to lose his father to a maniac's lust for power."

As he continued speaking, he could see everyone's expressions change. The crowd was slowly being moved by his 'selfless' story of heroism. Something like this could only work on a planet like earth.

Had he been bullshitting about heroism as a mercenary on some advanced planet, people would die laughing at him.

Nevertheless, as long as Ashton can achieve the end he desires, he wouldn't mind throwing a cringy line or two for now.

"Unlike what Ms Hana said, I am no hero. Whatever I did today was because of my selfish desire for revenge, nothing more. However, there's something I want to do to fulfil my promise to Ms Hana."

Having said his piece, Ashton summoned Raphael and dragged the President out of the domain. As soon as the civilians saw their President in his dilapidated condition, they gasped in shock, but their shocked faces were quickly replaced by enraged ones.

Ashton had had some time to think about everything. Eventually, he came to the realisation that he had already taken his revenge on the President. After all, the man had lost everything. His power, his authority and most importantly, his identity were all gone now.

Killing him a million times was inconsequential. The man had already accepted his end, and torturing a defeated man wasn't fun. However, seeing him witness the newly created hatred of his people towards him was surprisingly pleasurable.

Despite whatever Ashton and Hana had said to manipulate the crowd, they knew whatever the President did, was for his people, the very people who hated him now. But their hatred wasn't enough yet... at least not for Ashton.

"What's... happening?" The President mumbled, staring at Ashton.

However, Ashton ignored his question and continued addressing the crowd.

"I'm sure you all have already realised the man you see before yourselves is no undead but a mortal being." He exclaimed at the top of his lungs, "You might ask how is that possible? The answer is pretty simple. After having his fill torturing humans, he wanted to turn his attention to all of you!"

Smiling on the inside, Ashton continued, "His team developed a virus to infect all of you and slowly turn you into a human to fulfil the demand for meat as he was busy turning humans into walking weapons."

If the crowd wasn't enraged before, it certainly was now. The President tried to intervene but was quickly kicked into the back of his head by Hana; she then planted his head onto the ground for the rest of the time Ashton was on the podium.

"I gave him a taste of his own medicine before presenting him before you." Ashton nodded, and Hana stepped off her father, "As much as I wanted to kill him, it wasn't my place to judge him. You're the people he has wronged the most. Therefore, it should be you who decides his punishment-"

"What's there to decide? OFF WITH HIS HEAD!" Someone yelled from the crowd.

"I say we torture him first! This bastard doesn't deserve a quick death!" Yet another voice suggested.

"Chop him to pieces before feeding them to rabid wolves!"

Soon chants of 'kill him!' filled the air. The people the President had worked so hard for were the ones after his life, and there was nothing he could do to prove his innocence.

Even if he had tried, the crowd was already under the influence of Ashton's enraging words. The undead would not listen to his pleas, let alone leave him alive.

Once the crowd got agitated enough, Ashton grabbed the President by his neck and threw him into the mob that was hungry for his blood.

"Do what you will with him," Ashton mumbled before donning his mask and leaving the stage as the entire place was filled with the President's painful cries for help.

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Somewhere outside the Orion belt, the Metal shark leader contemplated whether what he was about to do was a wise decision on his part or not. Once the communicator connected to the person on the other side, there was no going back.

The Cult Priest was against it, but their hands were tied at the moment.

However, while they were busy debating, the communicator rang on its own. The Leader wasn't someone who would easily get scared, but as soon as the communicator went off, he began sweating buckets.

"Your lordship," The Leader calmly mumbled.



"So you failed again." An electronic voice replied from the other side.

"Everything is under-"

"Lying to me isn't an option for you, Istishia. Time after time, you have tried and failed to achieve the task I personally assigned you, and you will not disappoint me anymore."

"Your lordship, you can't be serious-"

"You have proven to be a liability to our cause, nothing more. As such-"

"You provide me minimal resources, give next to no intel and still wish me to succeed without proper preparation?" The Cult Leader scoffed, "Heed my words; if I go down, I'll take everybody down with me!"

"Is that a threat?" The voice replied, and the Leader instantly knew he had messed up.

"My apologies, your Lordship. I spoke out of frustration..."

"Make sure it's your last mistake, or I'll ensure it for you." The voice warned before turning to the metal shark leader, "Do whatever you must, but I require that mortal by my side before the judgement day. Or else... you know what will follow."

"...yes, your lordship." The leaders replied as the call disconnected.

Chapter 519 First Test

"You good?" Anna mumbled, entering their bedroom.

"Yeah... I think." Ashton replied.

He had done what he set out to do. But even then, there was no peace for him. Something was wrong, but for the love of his life, he couldn't figure out why he felt so uneasy.

"Calm down..." Anna whispered in his ear while embracing him, "Everything's going to be fine. You did well... that's all that matters. Nirvana is free and, by extension, your kingdom to reign."

Ashton nodded; he knew his responsibilities had skyrocketed, as did his strength. He ruled over half of the earth with Nirvana and Lycania under his control. That coupled with his favourable relations with Alucard, it was safe to say the planet was firmly dependent on him.

That said, he now had the technology to clone himself and offer a vessel to Astaroth. The only issue was, how would he transfer a part of his conscience into a new body?

Astaroth and he were ingrained into one body. Therefore it wasn't as simple as cloning a new personality.

For example, when Mera was cloned, the new vessel had to develop its own personality, intelligence, and whatnot. It was partly because the technology to transfer one's conscience into another didn't exist, at least not on earth.

The fact Astaroth had no clues it would mean even the Xyrans weren't advanced enough to pull off something like that. In Ashton's mind, the Precursors were the only ones who could do something god-like as transplanting conscience from one body to the other.

Vulcan might know about an artefact or something the Precursors left behind that could help him. Though, Ashton wasn't delusional enough to think the Drawf would readily give him what he needed.

"Hey, are you even listening?" Anna flicked Ashton's head, "I can't believe it! How can you ignore a succubus?"

"I wasn't ignoring you," Ashton smiled, before flicking her back, "Just wondering what comes next. After all, there's not much left to do on earth."

"It's time to leave, I guess. Oh well, there's a lot we need to do out there as well, don't we?"

Anna was correct. A lot needed to be done, and time was limited. But one task took precedence over the rest-getting rid of that bounty hovering over his head.

There were two ways of taking down a bounty. One was by paying it off, that is, by giving the guild a hundred times the bounty money, and the second was by killing the person or organisation that issued the bounty.

Going down the first path was impossible, as only a handful of people had that kind of money to spend. Unfortunately, Ashton wasn't on that list, which meant he only had one option: to get rid of the Metal sharks and the Cult of Cosmos.

However, it was easier said than done. Metal Sharks were an organisation with little to no information about them. Even the Orion Empire had no clue about their whereabouts, let alone the identity of their prominent leaders.

Even if Ashton mobilised the entire ONI to get information about them, it could take years, and they might fail altogether. Eliminating the leaders wasn't going to be easy, either. It would be better to lay low for a while and build up his forces. Unless...

"It's time to contact them. If anyone can find out about the cult and the sharks, it's them."

"The progenitors?" Anna asked.

Ashton replied positively, "If those sickos can bombard a Xyran city, they can do anything. More importantly, since the Progenitors and the Sharks are involved in the same field, they'd likely know something about them."

With renewed hope, Ashton was oddly excited to challenge the deep space again with new allies and enemies awaiting his return.

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A few days passed, and everything remained as usual in Nirvana. Viper and Alina rescued the remaining humans and Inhumans while the vampires helped the undead adapt to synthetic human flesh.

Synthetic flesh was nothing but organs cultivated using human stem cells. It was a technique Avalina came up with but was later perfected by her assistant. Though, for safety, it was decided the humans in the undead territory would move to Lycania.

Since Lycania's population had declined by nearly 40% due to corpsification gas, it was a welcomed move. This way, Lycania would gain some much-needed workforce to rebuild the country while it would also help the undead get attuned to synthetic flesh.

However, not everybody was happy with Lycania being turned into a predominant human state. While Ashton could suppress them by force, it wasn't good in the long run.

One solution was to turn a lot of humans into werewolves to manage the population difference. It would also fulfil Johnathan's desire as, for some reason, he wanted a lot of people to inherit Ashton's genes.

That said, forcing someone to transform wasn't a welcome move either. Although it would have been easier to suppress humans than the werewolves, Ashton didn't want to push either of them into something they wouldn't be comfortable with.

[First test as a ruler, what will you do now?]

"You're not helping..." Ashton absent-mindedly mumbled.

[It's not my job to look after everyone you adopt. Although I could offer you a suggestion or two based on my administrative experiences-]

"Killing anyone isn't an option."

[Why do you think every solution I offer involves genocide- Wait, never mind, I know why.]

Ashton chuckled before getting back to work.

Astaroth was correct. The situation was just one of many problems that would follow. He couldn't always depend on others to solve his issues for him.

The logical thing to do would be to divide the nation into two. But then resource allocation and management would become a problem.

"It'd be best to make Livan an independent state."

[You mean-]

"Yeah, make Livan sort of earth embassy for the outworlders. That way, the werewolves won't have an issue with the humans managing the place." Ashton mumbled while stroking his chin, "In return, the Giholos can keep the humans in check. A win-win situation for everyone!"

[Hm... it could work. Not to mention, humans would be better hosts than a bunch of rowdy werewolves.]

Chapter 520 Territory Management

The golden glow of dusk spread its wings through the sky, the perfect sunrise many don't admire.

Ashton did not enjoy the sun either, which wasn't surprising since his predominant genes were attuned to darkness.

However, the day was different. For the first time in a while, he decided to deactivate the vampire and undead genes and embrace his lively side.

'It's been so long I forgot how it felt to have blood rushing through my veins.' He thought while strolling around Livan with Aegis by his side.

The construction work was moving faster than anyone had predicted. Ashton had no doubts that Vulcan and the Giholan reinforcement were the reason behind the rapid progress.

With Vulcan's creationist skills and human-Giholan workforce, the results were astonishing. No matter what they did, the work was always a bit over the top. But Ashton didn't mind, and neither did the residents.

"Kyu~" Aegis purred, rubbing his scent all over Ashton.

Ashton playfully pinched his cheeks before settling Aegis on his shoulder. Master's shoulder was his favourite place to be as he got to play with Ashton's unkempt hair and ears.

Upon watching how happy Aegis was wherever he was around him, Ashton had made it a point to spend as much time as possible with his pet. After all, he hadn't found the opportunity to do it before, and it seemed Aegis was thoroughly enjoying Ashton's decision.

"My lord," Priska, the Giholan consulate, greeted Ashton.

It was Otiga's idea to set up an embassy for the Giholans as it would let other civilisations know that earth had attained intergalactic allies. Detering other civilisations from exploiting the earth.

Also, it would boost the trading of resources and technologies between the two planets while encouraging other civilisations to do the same. That said, Ashton formally appointed Otiga to be earth's representative with a vote of confidence from the undead and the vampires.

"Lady Priska, to what do I owe the pleasure?" Ashton politely inquired.



Ashton's politeness came out of mutual respect and admiration, even though he didn't need to show respect towards the Giholan as they technically viewed him as a god.

"I have taken care of the arrangements as you wanted." Priska replied, her eyes planted on the ground, "Kass wanted me to deliver the news to you."

"Thank you for your help. I hope your relations with my people continue prospering even in my absence."

"It will, your lordship. We Giholans will gladly give up our lives to fulfil your wishes!"

"That's where you are wrong," Ashton shook his head while Aegis imitated him, "The Giholans are as close to my heart as the earthlings. I would never want anything to happen to either of you, so please, no giving up your life. Am I clear?"

Ashton's casual gesture was enough to make Priska overwhelmed with happiness. While Seraph's descendant didn't realise it, his words of affirmation were equivalent to a slave being treated as a family member by its masters.

Priska silently nodded before hurriedly retreating. Her actions left Ashton confused until he realised what had happened.

—

The Familiarity of [Giholan] civilisation has increased!

Relationship level has increased!

Status: Followers (Lvl 2) -- The Giholans would follow your every command even if it leads to certain death.

Perks:

-- Industrialisation: Goods production rate will be increased by 2% as long as 4 Giholans contribute to the production facility. (Maximum number of facilities: 5)

-- Warfare: Giholans on the battlefield grant a 5% stat boost to surrounding non-Giholan units. (Can be stacked up to 3 times.)

-- Tech: Discoveries and inventions will enjoy a higher success rate of coming to fruition under Giholan supervision.

—

'What the heck is all this?'

[Have patience, will you, I need to remember how to do this...]

'Do what?'

As if on cue, another notification appeared before Ashton's eyes, which left him bamboozled.

—

The administrator has recognised your efforts and unlocked <Territory Management tab>!

You can now assign roles and resources to develop your territory anywhere across the galaxy.

Proceed with registering <Livan> as the host's first territory?

<Yes/No>

—

'Wait, you're telling me I could have managed Livan remotely this entire time?'

[Yeah, I kind of forgot about it till I saw the previous pop-up. But the good thing is, I remembered it now! Let's not waste any more time and get the city registered.]

Ashton had a lot of questions about the system and the secrets Astaroth had 'forgotten' about but decided to focus on the massive thing hovering before him instead.

As soon as Ashton selected yes, a detailed map of Livan appeared before him with names of everyone currently within the city. Even the buildings were named and had unique roles such as production, granary, weapon storage, and whatnot.

The sudden influx of information was a bit overwhelming, but with Astaroth's guidance, Ashton got accustomed to everything reasonably quickly.

[Now select the perks you want to apply to the city. Since it's a lvl 1 community, you can only use three perks, which is perfect since you got three bonuses from Giholan familiarity.]

Ashton nodded, and immediately a list of perks appeared before him. There were quite a few perks related to humans, werewolves, vampires, inhumans and basically every species that lived in the city. But only the ones he got from Giholans were useful for now.

Sadly, it seemed his personal achievements had nothing to do with the perks. Instead, a community effort was of more importance.

'Well, it's territory management, so it makes sense community achievements are more important.'

[One less thing for me to explain. Why can't you keep getting stuff on your own?]

'Why do you keep forgetting system functions?'

[Fair.]

While bickering, Ashton selected the perks, which got activated immediately. Since they were only beginner-level perks, there wasn't a noticeable change. However, the changes would bear fruits in the long run.

Also, Ashton would get more perks as more people settled down in Livan and when the territory eventually levelled up.

'By the way, thanks. This would make my life a lot easier.'

[Hehe.]