

Zompiewolf 691

Chapter 691 Two Is Better Than One (7)

"Well, you're not the only Xyran I have fought," Ashton retorted, turning into a full-blown Zompiewolf. "And I wasn't a Precursor when I ripped them to shreds!"

Upon witnessing his transformation, the smaller ships immediately lined up before Ashton to stop him. But they had severely underestimated his final form.

"You should have picked another day to invade my planet," Ashton roared in fury as he launched himself towards the ships.

His crimson eyes glowed with hostility as he tore through the Xyran ships in his path.

The smaller vessels didn't stand a chance as the zompiewolf lunged at them, rending them apart with monstrous claws and ferocious bites. Their hulls buckled and crumpled beneath his brutal assault, explosions erupting in his wake.

"What the hell is that thing?" one of the ship's captains roared over the comms but was disconnected as his ship turned into smithereens.

Even Ashton was a bit taken aback by his strength. He hadn't turned into a Zompiewolf while having his precursor cells active. But now that he did, he realised why Vulcan had suggested him not to do it.

The sheer might of the monstrous form enhanced by the Precursor genes proved overwhelmingly powerful. Ashton had to exert every ounce of his concentration to harness his abilities despite his objective simply being to annihilate everything before him.

By this time, the visitors from the Kernel Tower finally joined the fray. But as they did, all they saw was a sky littered with explosions.

The Xyran forces, who had moments ago been full of courage and confidence, faltered now that they faced a nightmarish adversary.

Ashton moved with unnatural speed, his feral instincts honed to perfection. Earth's defenders could only watch in awe and terror as the creature unleashed its destructive wrath upon the invaders.

"Do we even need to help him?" Vimur commented as the rest of the Ghosts followed his ship.

"We're not here to help him," Laihud shook his head as he manoeuvred the ship to the other side of the city. "We're here to help the people and fend off the Xyran troops on ground."

"Open the hatch," Anna commented as she and the Twins lined up on the safety latch.

Laihud nodded and opened it around the sector littered with most Xyrans. The trio fell from the ship and spurted their wings as they headed straight towards the Xyrans.

However, before they could begin their assault on the Xyrans, Irina saw a familiar face that she wasn't expecting to see there.

"Is that... father?" she mumbled, and Verina's attention immediately shifted there.

Amid the chaos, Alucard and his three remaining royal guards found themselves surrounded by a horde of ruthless Xyran grunts. These grunts were notorious for their brutality, often devouring their defeated foes alive.

The odds were stacked against Alucard and his loyal guards, but they stood their ground, ready to face whatever gruesome fate awaited them.

"Whatever happens from now out," Alucard rallied the courage in his men. "It has been an honour to fight alongside warriors like yourselves."

"Haha," the Captain of the royal guards laughed. "My liege, you speak as if this is our final battle! Fret not, sir. For I will slaughter them all if need be to protect you!"

"Arrogant till the very end, huh?" Alucard smirked and prepared himself for the onslaught.

The grunts pressed on with unrelenting ferocity, their sheer numbers threatening to overwhelm Alucard and his loyal guards. Each swing of their weapons met a horde of foes, but the odds were increasingly stacked against them.

Unfortunately, one of the soldiers dropped his guard and was dragged into the swarm to meet his end. His companions roared in anger, determined to avenge their fallen comrade.

The more Grunts they cut down, the more seemed to appear before them. One by one, Alucard's trusted royal guards met their tragic ends, bravely defending their lord to their last breath.

Now, only Alucard and his trusted Captain were left behind as the grunts circled them. As Grunts closed in on them, Alucard and his Captain stood back to back, united in their final stand.

Alucard nodded to his Captain, silently acknowledging that they both knew what this meant. The Captain returned the nod, a fierce glint of loyalty in his eyes, and whispered...

"It has been an honour to serve under you, my lord."

"Oh, now you want to be thankful?" Alucard laughed even in their dire circumstance. "If this is the end, let's ensure it's a worthy one."

With a final, shared understanding, they continued to fight side by side. But the odds were overwhelmingly against them. Within minutes, the Captain, too, got attacked.

"Not on my watch!" Alucard roared, raising his sword as the Grunts rushed to rip apart the unconscious guard.

Then the unthinkable happened. A blood-curdling roar pierced the air as one of the Xyran Grunts bit into Alucard's hand, tearing it away. The loss of his weapon and the grievous injury left Alucard defenceless and vulnerable. Death seemed inevitable, closing in on him like a veil.

But in the darkest hour of the battle, when it seemed there was no hope left, redemption descended from above to save him.

Two shadowy figures dropped from the skies, landing amidst the relentless grunts, their movements swift and deadly. In mere moments, the grunts that threatened Alucard's life were cut down, their grotesque forms falling in heaps around the two mysterious figures.

"How dare you!?" Irina roared as she ripped a grunt's head with her bare hands. "How dare you touch our father!?"

Verina, on the other hand, was too upset to express her emotions in words. Instead, she approached Alucard and hugged him tightly as tears welled up in her eyes.

"Here, use this potion; it will stop the bleed for now," she whispered, handing Alucard a potion before joining her sister. "Drink it and rest. This won't take long."

The twins moved with the grace of dancers, their weapons striking down the foes that dared threaten their father's life.

Chapter 692 United We Stand (1)

Soon, the battle between Ashton and the Xyrans entered its climax. Orion and mercenary ships continuously shot missiles and laser cannons at the Xyran fleet.

There were casualties on each side, but since the Xyran had attacked the tower master, the mercenaries had no choice but to fight back.

As for the Orion Empire, they couldn't afford to miss the chance to get on Ashton's good side as well as deal a massive blow to the Xyrans, who were the only civilisation stronger than them.

While their reasons for engaging in the battle varied amongst them, the end result they wanted was the same. To annihilate the Xyrans and end their dominance in the galaxy.

As the battle continued, it brought countless deaths, both on the surface and over it. Massive clouds of smoke and dust erupted throughout New Lycania as ships constantly crashed and fired on the city dwellers.

The blossoming city of New Lycania was now a mere shadow of what it had been before. Even with countless factions uniting against the Xyrans, the latter had the edge in the fight.

Soon, the mercenaries realised that such a large-scale battle was above their pay grade. Some of their ships had been blown to smithereens, and those inside turned ashes.

Chaos, unadulterated chaos, was before everyone's eyes as some ships tried escaping back to the Tower for repairs and reinforcements. Kass continuously made 'safe' passage for as many ships as possible while actively fighting against the Xyrans.

Laihud and Ava had taken their position as medics on the battlefield, struggling to save as many lives as possible. In the meantime, Anna and Ashton's summons were busily chasing the Xyrans back and establishing a stronghold for their forces.

As for Bismarck, he created a literal wall of skeletons to stop the continuous flow of Xyran soldiers invading their territory, offering some relief to the soldiers on the verge of collapsing.

Anna looked at the sky riddled with explosions. A few years ago, she would have never thought Earth would see a day like that. Yet countless civilisations were fighting a battle both on the surface, in the sky and beyond the planet.

If it had been a movie, she would love to experience it. But not in 11D as she was now.

"If things continue like this," Anna mumbled before ripping a Xyran Grunt in half. "We might actually win."

"Haha, that's where you are wrong, Anna!" Vimur laughed as he flung countless Xyrans right into the dropship they crawled out of. "I had no doubt of our victory since the beginning!"

"Of course you didn't!" Otiga yelled back and kept firing her gun. "You lack an organ called 'the Brain' to analyse things! Your muscles won't work against those massive cannons hooked under those Xyran ships!"

Even Anna noticed it had been a while since the Xyrans fired the cannons on them. She couldn't even fathom how many soldiers they lost thanks to those early cannon attacks.

Clearly, those cannons were the Xyran's primary weapon when dealing with the surface dwellers. Yet they hadn't fired the artillery in a while.

"Not to jinx it or something, but why they aren't firing the cannons?" Anna asked Otiga while saving her from a rogue bullet.

"Your beloved is the reason for that," Otiga replied with a smile. "They tried it on him once and weren't pleased with the results. Besides, firing those cannons could drain the generator that's keeping their ships afloat. Which means-

"They can either maintain the advantage of being at higher 'ground' or give up and let the Orions blast them out of existence?" Anna was surprised as she hadn't thought about it that way. "We need to thank the Orion royalty for their help once the battle is over."

"Of course, but first, let's focus on the foes before us!" Vimur yelled and charged straight into a dropship and threw an entire crate of grenades he had inside.

Vimur nearly got caught in the explosion, but thanks to his bulky physique, gravity came to his rescue. But that didn't stop Otiga from yelling at him for his reckless attack.

While the two of them exchanged explicitives, Anna's gaze returned to the sky. While she couldn't see Ashton in the massive battle, it was easier to spot his trail as he took down one ship after the other.

But not everything was as great as it seemed.

On the side of the Twins, things were looking grim as they now faced the Xyran elite units, the infiltrators. While they were weaker in numbers than the grunts, they were deadly and stealthy task forces deployed to deal with specific targets.

Irina was already bleeding and could barely stand while Verina tried her best to defend against the infiltrators. Alucard had passed out after the twins treated his wounds, but his life was still in danger.

"Damn these bastards..." Irina mumbled as she struggled to get to her feet.

The twins refused to back down as the elite Xyrans closed in, but their grim expressions betrayed their brave conviction.

Their strikes, usually swift and deadly, seemed ineffective against the seemingly invulnerable infiltrators. Desperation set in as the twins realised they were outmatched and about to meet their maker.

"It's as if they can predict our every move," Irina muttered, her frustration evident in her voice.

Verina, her face marked with a streak of blood, replied, "We need to find a way to break their defences, or we won't last much longer."

Just as the Infiltrators were about to deliver another blow to them, a haunting howl echoed in the distance, growing louder with every passing second.

The twins and the Infiltrators turned their gaze toward the source of the sound, their eyes widening in disbelief at what they saw. Hundreds of Ashton's pet Wraith Wolves charged onto the battlefield, but they weren't the only ones.

The Gryphons from the dungeon Ashton had conquered on Euphoria during a task were flying over the Wraith Wolves, and on top of them was Ursa, leading the beasts into battle against her sworn foes... the Xyrans.

Chapter 693 United We Stand (2)

The relationship among the players on the battlefield was complex. While Ursa hated the Xyrans from the core of her being, it was the opposite with the Precursors.

The Precursors had treated Ursa and her species with respect. On the other hand, the Xyrans had eliminated them, humiliated her and finally trapped her in a quest for others to claim victory.

It took another Precursor, Ashton, to save her from that hell even though he was a mere tribrid back then. However, she did not know that Ashton's greatest enemy was no other than a Precursor.

She didn't know it yet, but she will soon, and that's when the actual test of her loyalty will begin. But for now, Ursa's enemies were before her, ready to be devoured by the creatures she had formed a great bond with.

The Xyran infiltrators turned to face this new threat, uncertainty in their eyes as they raised their weapons. However, their attacks proved to be fruitless, as no matter what they did, the resilient wolves refused to die.

The Xyrans would shoot them, but the wolves would only stay down for a moment or two before resuming their attack.

Magic was Wraith Wolves' only weakness, and the infiltrators had no magic to combat these creatures, and they were quickly overwhelmed by the relentless spectral onslaught.

As if that wasn't enough, the Gryphons from above kept piling on them and dropped grenades over the Xyrans using talons. If they ran out of grenades from the sack attached to them, they attacked the Xyrans the old-fashioned way.

Irina and Verina watched in awe as the tables turned in their favour. A sense of triumph and gratitude towards Ursa replaced the fear that had gripped them only moments ago. Had it not been for her, they would have died for sure.

The Wraith Wolves swarmed the infiltrators, their otherworldly howls echoing through the battlefield, drowning out the cries of the defeated Xyrans.

However, Gryphons weren't immune to the Xyrans as the wolves were and had to take caution. But even then, they were continuously shot in the skies.

"You should take the man and leave!" Ursa called to the twins. "Take him to the safe zone, and I'll ensure no one follows you there."

Saying so, Ursa instructed four wolves to accompany them back to the safe zone where Laihud, Ava and the rest of the medic team were treating the injured.

"Are you sure?" Irina asked Ursa as they placed Alucard over the beasts.

"I've never been more sure of anything in my life," Ursa grinned. "Now go, your old man doesn't have much time left."

"We won't forget about the help," Verina said as they took off.

"Sentimental beings..." Ursa shook her head before turning her attention towards the Infiltrators. "Now then, how would you like to die? We have three options: Chewed to death, torn to shreds and tossed around till dead. Feel free to try as many options as you'd like."

Ashton hovered in the sky filled with smoke, dust, and charged debris of falling ships, looking around for a trace of the Xyra mothership that had disappeared while he was dealing with the smaller vessels.

"Tarik, you there?" Ashton contacted the person in charge of the orbital cannons.

"Sure am!" Tarik panted.

Tarik was gasping for air, even though all he had to do was execute the program responsible for firing the cannons.

He was working tirelessly to change the targets swiftly, ensuring no friendly ships were accidentally hit in the crossfire. Ashton shook his head as he realised why Tarik was panting.

"You really should have enlisted the AIs to assist you with this task," he suggested. "Either way, do you know the mothership's whereabouts? If I can locate and eliminate it, we might gain the upper hand in this battle."

"Affirmative, it is... right above you!"

As Tarik's words echoed in Ashton's earpiece, he sensed something heading his way and immediately flew backwards. The following moment, there was a loud explosion as a massive energy blast struck the ground, vapourising a third of New Lycania.

Ashton felt lucky, but when he saw the massive crater below him, he was enraged. In the blink of an eye, hundreds, if not thousands, of people died, and Ashton was even more pissed now.

Before he could do anything about it, the Orions fired countless shells at the mothership, but even that wasn't enough to bring down the massive vessel. It was then Tarik's voice echoed once again in Ashton's earpiece.

"You might want to back off a bit now," he said.

"Why?" Ashton asked about Tarik's odd suggestion.

"Because I don't want you to get caught in the explosion."

Ashton's eyes then went to the orbital cannons in the distance. The towering mouths were pulsing with energy. Tarik was overcharging the cannons and had trained their aim on the mothership.

"This is the sole method to incapacitate it," Tarik explained. "A colossal EMP pulse should render the ship inactive, and gravity will do the rest. Nonetheless, this will deplete the cannons' energy, so you must remain vigilant against hostile vessels attempting to target you."

"You sure it'll work?" Ashton still had doubts about the plan as it was quite a gamble. "We are risking the cannons on this."

"I have run the simulations. It was successful 87.55% of the time."

"What about the rest?"

"Do you even want to know that?" Tarik chuckled over the radio.

"Fine, let's do this," Ashton said as he switched to their allied channel. "Everyone, back up! A huge blast is on the way! I repeat, back up now!"

This order made the captains very confused. Nonetheless, most of them were bound to listen to Ashton as he was their leader, and the rest were used to obeying orders as a soldier, so they quickly did as they were told.

Before the Xyrans aboard the mothership knew what was going on, Tarik unleashed the emp wave on them. The ship tried manoeuvring out of the harm's way, but it was too late.

The blast hit the mothership right in the hull. The shields around the ship flickered before disappearing as the engine lost power. Without the engines to support them, the vessel immediately crashed through the skies toward the ground, forming a crater as dust shot into the sky like a fountain.

Chapter 694 United We Stand (3)

"Move! Move! Move!" Ashton's voice boomed over the radio, and like a flock of vultures, everyone descended upon the crash site.

With their mothership incapacitated, the Xyrans were thrown into disarray. Their focus shifted from the numerous battlefronts, causing them to lose ground.

Protecting their mothership and commander was the top priority for the Xyrans, and they rushed toward the crash site. However, their retreat was met with intensified attacks from Ashton's forces, and their numbers dropped exponentially.

Meanwhile, the Xyran soldiers on board the mothership were already disembarking as Ashton arrived at the site. Orion and mercenary vessels encircled them, forcing the remaining Xyran ships to stand down.

Furthermore, the risk of their bullets inadvertently damaging the mothership drove the Xyrans to halt their fire, both from land and air. But even then, the Xyrans weren't ready to give up.

"I thought you had fought Precursors before?" Ashton taunted the Xyrans as he hovered above the ground.

"..." The confident, feminine voice was nowhere to be heard.

Ashton stared at the Xyrans below. Most of them were strong enough to destroy a small planet alone. From the simulations he ran with his masters, Ashton knew they were not to be messed with.

But that was the case in past. Now, he could efficiently deal with them, but that would place others in harm's way, and Ashton didn't want that to happen.

Just then, a female winged Xyran walked out of the ship, wearing a blue battlesuit. It didn't take long for Ashton to realise she was the one who had challenged him earlier.

As Ashton stared into her eyes, he saw a hint of nervousness. The mothership was the Xyran's hail mary with enough technology to stop a Precursor.

But since Ashton had nearly destroyed the ship, there wasn't much the Xyrans could have done against Ashton. Yet the lady from before was standing before him with weapons in hand, ready to fight to the death if necessary.

It wasn't a reckless decision, as others might have thought, but more of a last resort. There was no way the lady could defeat Ashton, and the more she thought about it, the more desperation took over her.

The Xyrans had thought they would easily overpower a Precursor who didn't know the full extent of his power. However, they hadn't taken his allies into account and paid a massive price for it.

The Xyran looked at the crashed ship and then the ones flying above. She knew no one was coming for their aide anymore.

"What's this nonsense," the Xyran scoffed, shaking her head. "To think we'll be stranded on a planet that we swore to never step foot on... pathetic!"

Ashton quietly watched on, reverting to his humanoid form. His aura had been restored, so there was no point in keeping his Zompiewolf form anymore.

"Why are you here?" Ashton calmly asked Xyran, who sighed heavily before responding.

"We're searching for a lost member-"

Before the lady could finish, Ashton interrupted her. "If you're looking for Beelzebub, he's right there. Though, you won't recognise him anymore."

As Ashton mentioned his name, Guilt walked right behind him. His ugly form was certainly unrecognisable, but the identification ship in his body confirmed his identity.

The Xyran woman let out a shocked gasp but swiftly regained control over her emotions. Beelzebub had been her husband for years, and although it was a marriage of convenience and she had never truly cared for him, he was still her spouse. Witnessing him in such a dire condition momentarily disrupted her composure.

"What have you done to my husband!?" the lady asked, and Ashton raised an eyebrow.

"Your husband?" Ashton asked, wanting to confirm the lady's identity, and when she reiterated the fact, he couldn't help but laugh at the situation.

Ashton might seem like a maniac to them, but from how he saw things, the situation was absolutely ridiculous. Astaroth's ex-fiancee was standing in front of him!

However, the Xyrans perceived the situation as a mockery and lashed out, launching attacks on those nearby. If there was anything they cherished above their lives, it was their pride.

Ashton's actions had wounded their pride to such an extent that they were willing to forsake their lives and assault anyone in their path.

Countless abilities and bullets were shot everywhere, once again bringing chaos to the battlefield. Bodies keep falling one after another, but Ashton stood idle, mimicking Ibis, Seraph's daughter.

"I've heard a lot about you, Ibis," Ashton smiled. "Honestly, I would rather not put my hands on a friend's love. So how about we stop all this drama and talk things over?"

"How do you know that name?" Obis retorted.

"Is the noise too much?" Ashton rolled his eyes. "I just called you my friend's lover. Didn't it ring a bell?"

"Beelzebub is not my lover-"

"I wasn't talking about him," Ashton cut her off again.

"...It can't be," Ibis mumbled as she came to terms with what Ashton hinted.

Beelzebub and Astaroth were the only men in her life. If Beelzebub didn't tell him about her, it had to be Astaroth... but how was it possible? He had died over a century ago!

"Things are often not how they seem to be," Ashton said with a knowing smile. "We both have things we need to talk about. So let's-"

While he was talking, a Xyran charged towards Ashton. Ibis tried stopping the guy, but it was too late. By the time the word left her mouth, the Xyran was at Ashton's feet... cut in two pieces.

"How dare you!"

Seeing a comrade slived in half before her, Ibis no longer intended to chat with Ashton and attacked him.

"Oj, I'm about to hit your ex. Hope you don't mind," Ashton said, but there was no reply from Astaroth as usual.

Ashton had two objectives when he told Ibis about Astaroth. The first was to get her to agree on a ceasefire, which failed miserably. The second was to get Astaroth to react, but he failed there as well.

"I guess I'll have to take harder measures after all..."

Chapter 695 United We Stand (4)

The battlefield was a harrowing sight of devastation, a grim testament to the merciless toll of war. As far as the eye could see, the landscape lay shrouded in smoke and ruin. The air was thick with the acrid stench of burning metal and the distant cries of the wounded.

The remnants of destroyed homes were all an eye could see. Crumbled walls and shattered windows bore witness to the brutality of the conflict that had swept through the area.

Debris and rubble were strewn across the landscape, creating treacherous terrain and makeshift barricades for those who still clung to life in the war-torn area.

Corpses, both human and alien, littered the ground like landmarks. Their lifeless forms told stories of valour and despair, of dreams and hopes extinguished in the unforgiving crucible of battle.

Some lay in twisted, unnatural positions, while some only had pieces of the body left, making it impossible to know whose side they were fighting for.

But the place wasn't the graveyard for corpses only. Spaceships, remnants of a once-proud fleet, dotted the battlefield like fallen giants.

Their scorched and mangled hulls stood as silent sentinels, bearing the scars of combat. Smoke billowed from some of them, the fires within smouldering as they gradually succumbed to destruction.

Others had crash-landed amid the chaos, their twisted frames and shattered wings serving as stark reminders of the high cost of interstellar warfare.

The once-blue sky had been stained by the smoke and haze of battle, casting a menacing shadow over the entire scene. The distant rumble of space battles waged high above seemed like a grim overture to the tragedy below.

Explosions lit up the horizon, creating fleeting bursts of light that illuminated the bleakness of the scene before plunging it back into darkness.

The ground itself had been churned into a nightmarish landscape of trenches and craters, where the earth seemed to weep from the violence inflicted upon it. The mud was thick with the blood of fallen soldiers and the muck of relentless combat.

Amid this horror, the survivors remained, their faces etched with weariness and sorrow, but they kept fighting for their cause.

They navigated the treacherous terrain, some seeking cover among the wreckage while others tending to the wounded.

The devastating elements of the battlefield told a haunting story of loss, sacrifice, and the unrelenting nature of conflict. It was a place where dreams had turned to dust and where the echoes of war reverberated through the desolation.

But even then, most participants focused on the two figures around the centre of the battlefield. Ibis was no stranger to warfare, having been trained by Seraph, her father.

Though skilled and quick, it was the first time she engaged in close combat with a Precursor and was nervous as hell. But she knew as the leader, she had an obligation to protect her people or die trying.

On the other hand, Ashton couldn't be bothered as Ibis revealed the weapon of her choice. A pair of claws popped out of her hand, but the most weird thing was the blades were made of plasma.

Ibis' icy blue eyes locked onto Ashton, who shook his head, an ironic smile on his lips. It was clear he was mocking her.

"Draw your weapon," Ibis suggested to Ashton. "I'd rather not hear any excuses later about how I beat someone without a weapon."

"A weapon, huh?" Ashton mumbled, looking at his fists. "Are these enough for you?"

Like he said, Ashton had no need for weapons. Under Vulcan's sharp eyes and Flintmace's guidance, he had trained for years, honing his body into a lethal weapon. Flexing his muscles, he cracked his knuckles and stepped forward in Ibis's direction, waiting for her first move.

Ibis lunged forward, her twin blades whirling in deadly arcs. Ashton blocked her strikes with his forearms, his expression unchanging.

Seeing as her attack had failed, Ibis jumped backwards, wanting to create some distance. But Ashton was having none of it. He closed the distance between them, launching a flurry of punches at Ibis.

Ashton's fists were like battering rams, each strike backed by the raw strength of a Precursor. Ibis, though more agile than Ashton, found herself struggling to parry his relentless blows.

Ibis swung her claws in a desperate attempt to counter Ashton's relentless assault and soon realised she was outmatched. Ashton's superior strength and technique were overwhelming her.

She staggered backwards, trying to regain her composure. But Ashton pressed the advantage, closing in on her, his fists relentlessly attacking Ibis.

The Xyrans, who had gathered to witness the confrontation between Ibis and the Precursor, stood in shock as Ibis struggled against Ashton in the fight.

Wide-eyed and mouths agape, they had expected a swift and brutal victory from their leader. Instead, they saw her being pushed to her limits, her usual grace and confidence replaced by a desperate fight for survival.

Soon, Ibis was backed into a corner with no space to retreat as their spaceship blocked her way. With no other way out, Ibis pushed forward. Her sudden aggressiveness took Ashton by surprise, but he kept his cool.

As Ibis swung her claws again, instead of blocking her as usual, Ashton ducked and, before Ibis knew it, his hand darting out to grip her wrist as it passed by him.

"You're way too careless to be a warrior..." Ashton mumbled.

With a quick twist, he disarmed her, sending one of her swords clattering to the ground. Ibis staggered back, momentarily off balance.

Ashton seized the opportunity. He launched a flurry of punches, aiming for Ibis's chest and face. His fists connected with rapid, thunderous blows, each striking with pinpoint accuracy.

Ibis struggled to defend herself, her arms frantically moving to block the relentless assault, but in vain. Ashton's fists were like asteroids hitting a planet, and Ibis could not regain her footing for such a vicious assault.

Ibis, bloodied and battered, fell to her knees. With nothing else left to do, Ashton was about to deliver the final, crushing blow that would end the fight.

He reeled his punch backwards, his fist cocked and ready to strike. But just as he was about to release the finishing blow, a familiar voice echoed inside his head.

[Ashton... stop. You've done enough.]

Chapter 696 Soul Splitter (1)

Ashton stopped upon hearing Astaroth's voice, his fist hovering inches from Ibis's face. Meanwhile, Ibis, breathing heavily and weakened, locked eyes with Ashton.

Despite the pain and exhaustion, her gaze had a flicker of defiance. She knew she was at the mercy of her opponent, but she refused to yield. Unfortunately, she was way too weak to continue.

"Woah, a mute bastard spoke!" Ashton mocked Astaroth, who once again was silent.

[...I know you're pissed-]

"Pissed? PISSED?" Ashton cut him off. "Is that all you have to say for yourself? I nearly died, damn it!

Then Flintmace and Vulcan had to sacrifice themselves for my sake, and now you fucking ex destroyed half the city, and you think I'm pissed?"

[...I'm sorry. But please, don't take your anger out on her. She isn't-]

"Look here, you fucking simp! I don't care if she means something to you or not! Someone has to take the responsibility-"

[Then let me do it.]

Reluctantly, Ashton lowered his hand, allowing Ibis to slump to the floor. He stepped back, his fists unclenched, yet his anger remained unshaken.

"Stay here," Ashton sternly warned her, but something unexpected happened as soon as he turned her back towards her.

Two Xyrans, who couldn't watch their commander treated in the way she was, rushed to attack Ashton. Ashton took a deep breath, tired of their cowardly ways and was about to crush them using his aura.

But before he could do that, Anna came rushing towards them and, using Ashton's shoulder, jumped in the air before smashing the Xyrans' heads into the ground.

"No one will touch my man without my permission!" Anna yelled at the top of her voice while brandishing the Staff of Eden.

The Xyrans were well aware of the staff's renown, as the legends spoke of how even the mighty Precursors had cowered in fear and wisely kept their distance from it.

But seeing someone wielding the staff made the Xyrans wonder what they were doing attacking monsters like Ashton and Anna.

Ashton smiled and nodded, thanking Anna for help, but then continued walking towards the battlefield's edge to chat with Astaroth.

"Alright, speak now."

[Let me talk to her.]

"Why? You want to patch things up with her?" Ashton scoffed.

[I would love to, but no... It is related to defeating Kro'Han.]

"I'm listening..."

Astaroth paused for a moment, gathering his thoughts before speaking.

[The Xyrans possess a unique technology to separate their souls into two vessels. The council have used it to achieve virtual immortality. But there's a catch.

Since the rest of the council likely wouldn't help you, it only leaves us with Ibis, and she's not likely to reveal it to you willingly.]

Once he heard this, Ashton's gaze shifted to Ibis, who was still on the ground as he had left her. Could she be the answer they had been looking for till now?

"But why didn't you tell me about it before?"

[We are supposed to be enemies with the Xyrans; what difference would it have made even if I told you about it?]

"Fair," Ashton chuckled. "So, what do you suggest?"

Astaroth hesitated, knowing that his proposal would require Ashton's trust and sacrifice. Since they hadn't been on the best of terms, he wasn't sure if Ashton would even allow it.

[I could temporarily assume control of your body, just long enough to speak to Ibis and convince her to help us-]

"You do remember that you killed her father, right?"

Astaroth got silent once again. It was true. He had killed Seraph, but because that's what Seraph had wanted and if Astaroth hadn't killed him, Seraph would have wiped out their entire race.

Of course, Ibis didn't know anything about it, which made matters worse. However, Astaroth had a plan that would give him what he wanted, but not how he would've liked.

[I'm hoping she remembers it well...]

Ashton contemplated the idea in silence for a moment. It was a significant decision, letting go of control over his body, even temporarily. But he had done it before, so he was sure he could take back control whenever he pleased.

"Alright, Astaroth. You can have control for five minutes," Ashton nodded. "But remember, the moment I sense something off, I'm taking the reigns back."

[Thank you, I'll owe you one.]

After a few minutes, Ashton returned to the site of the final fight. However, something was different. Everything seemed different, from how he walked to the aura around him. It was like someone else had taken over his body. Weirdly enough, that was precisely the case.

When Ibis saw Ashton again, she couldn't help but reminded of her first love and the person she wanted to kill the most but never could because he was already dead.

Yet Ashton suddenly reminded her of Astaroth, which made her feel conflicted. She had no idea how Ashton could mimic Astaroth so well.

"It's been a while, Luna."

Ibis's face turned white when she heard Astaroth's voice, so much so that she didn't notice that Astaroth had addressed her by her pet name that only Seraph and Astaroth used.

"Who are you...?" she asked, and Astaroth smiled.

"Who could it be but me?" he said, and Ibis immediately shot up, pressing her claws against his neck.

The Orions and mercenaries were about to react, but Astaroth raised his hand, telling them to stand down. At the same time, Ibis stared into Astaroth's eyes, refusing to believe the obvious truth.

"This should be enough to prove my identity," Astaroth continued and summoned Raphael.

A glance at the soul blade confirmed to Ibis that the man standing before her spoke the truth. The blade's identity was unmistakable, as a soul blade was an extension of its bearer's very essence.

When the bearer perished, the blade would crumble to dust. The blade's unbroken form served as irrefutable evidence that Astaroth was not only alive but present right in front of her.

Astaroth was expecting Ibis to turn hostile, but he was shocked when she melted in his embrace, crying her eyes out. Astaroth smiled wanly and hugged her like he had so many times before.

Chapter 697 Soul Splitter (2)

In the silent darkness of space, the cultist ships approached Planet Euphoria with a sense of urgency and foreboding. They were on a mission to check on their missing members, who had disappeared while attempting to retrieve the sacred Medallion.

The Medallion and two other artefacts were necessary for the Cult to fulfil their goal of resurrecting the Precursors. By resurrecting, they wanted to free all the imprisoned Precursors scattered throughout the galaxy.

They already had one such artefact in their possession and had information on where the other artefact could be. But they still needed the Medallion to fulfil the condition of the ritual.

Unfortunately, it had been weeks since they had last established contact with the task force sent to Euphoria to collect the Medallion. It wasn't uncommon for such missions to fail.

But this time, the Cult had sent their best indisposable warriors on the mission, so the chances of their failure were low. Yet, the members were lost.

If those members were dead, it would deal a significant blow to the Cult's morale, which wasn't all that high after knowing their number one enemy, The Reaper, had evolved into a Precursor.

The Cult had been established a millennium ago to resurrect the Precursors, and knowing they had formed enmity with one of them caused doubt in the Cult if they were following the right path.

But the Pope knew that a mortal being couldn't have transcended into godhood and refused to believe Reaper was a Precursor.

Due to the fear of the Pope, everyone kept their thoughts to themselves. But the Pope knew it was only a matter of time before his underlings started a rebellion and surrendered themselves to Reaper's mercy.

In order to prevent such a sinful situation and restore his authority over the Cult, the Pope himself embarked on the journey to retrieve the Medallion as well as the missing cultists on Euphoria.

It was risky, but the Pope needed to do so; otherwise, there was a high chance that the Cultists would lose faith in him.

'This has to be worth it...' the Pope wondered. 'Or 'they' won't hesitate to kill me.'

"Your Holiness, we have arrived," the Pilot informed the Pope.

"Good, prepare for landing."

"As you wish."

The Pilot did as he was told, but no one was ready to witness the sight before them. Their eyes widened in shock and disbelief as they descended through the atmosphere. Once lush and teeming with life, Planet Euphoria lay in ruins.

"What is this...?" The Pope questioned as the first visuals of the planet emerged on the screen. "This... can't be Euphoria!"

"I-I'll check the coordinates for any mistakes!"

The Pilot stammered and checked the data, but the result remained unchanged no matter how many times he checked. The planet before them had to be Euphoria.

"How can this be possible!?" the Pope politely mumbled.

Unlike before, the landscape was scarred, and the remnants of destruction marred its once-pristine surface. The bustling cities now lay in ruins. It couldn't possibly be the Euphoria that they knew.

The cultists landed their ships, and as they disembarked, they couldn't help but take in the desolation surrounding them. The Pope stood at the forefront, and his face was marked with confusion and concern.

"What could have caused such carnage on this planet?" he muttered to himself, his voice filled with uncertainty. "We need to find our brethren first! They might have some knowledge of what led to this... devastation."

The cultists separated into small platoons to scan the planet and search for their brethren. But their faces were etched with worry when they combed through the desolate terrain.

However, there was no sign of the cultists who had ventured to this planet. It was as though they had vanished without a trace. Even their spaceships were nowhere to be seen.

The more they searched, the more it became apparent that the planet appeared as though it had never been populated in the first place.

The structures that once dotted the landscape were now reduced to rubble, and the atmosphere had changed drastically, shrouding the planet in an eerie silence.

Just as confusion and anxiety hung in the air, a sudden, chilling sound cut through the stillness of the planet. The radio brought by the Cultists went berserk with screams.

"What's happening?" the Pope asked.

"We... don't know," one of the radio operators replied. "I'll fetch the video feed from the soldiers now!"

As he said that, the screens before them flickered to life, and all they saw was blood spilt everywhere. There was nothing else there. No corpses, nothing... just the blood.

A moment later, another cultist platoon was wiped out in less than a second, their screams echoing briefly before falling silent. Panic surged through the remaining cultists, and the Pope's eyes widened in terror.

"What was that?" one of the Cardinals shrieked as their radios went silent.

"I'm having a bad feeling about this," the Pope muttered. "Instruct everyone to get back. We can't afford to lose more soldiers now."

The Cardinal nodded and quickly barked orders for the rest of his forces to regroup. As they retreated to their ships, their hearts pounded, and their breaths came in quick gasps.

They were on the brink of despair, their mission to find their missing members turning into a nightmare as another platoon was wiped off their radars.

Someone or something was hunting them down, but no one wanted to stay around to gather intel. Half of the Cult was wiped out in a matter of seconds, causing everyone to panic.

It was then a decision was made. The Pope was in danger, and he, for one, didn't want to die yet. As such, he instructed the ships to take off, leaving behind a brunt of their force as a distraction for whatever was hunting them down.

However, not everything was going according to the plan. The ships had barely managed to escape the planet's atmosphere when their vessels stopped.

"What's going on!?" The Pope finally lost his cool.

"Y-Your Holiness! Something is dragging us back to the planet!" The Pilot yelled.

The Cardinals darted to the upper deck to see what was going on. Although they couldn't see the thing pulling them back to the planet's surface, they noticed that they were being dragged back to the surface.

"We... We're doomed..." the Pope mumbled.

Chapter 698 Soul Splitter (3)

Panic rippled through the ranks as they witnessed their ships being forcefully pulled back to Euphoria. Desperation set in, and numerous cult members rushed towards the escape pods as the dire situation escalated.

It soon became painfully clear that there were far fewer escape pods than there were people, and the grim reality of their predicament sank in.

The Cult was prominent for their stealth; as such, they rarely had the need to use escape pods. As such, the number of escape pods wasn't equal to the number of people on board the vessel.

Within moments, the scenario had transformed into an all-out battle for survival. Fearing the worst, individuals turned on each other in brutal skirmishes, each struggling to secure a coveted spot within an escape pod.

The violent clashes left a trail of spilt blood and chaos in their wake as the fight for a chance to escape Euphoria grew increasingly severe.

As the brutal brawls continued, the once-united cult members were now pitted against each other in a ruthless contest for their lives. It was a scene of chaos and desperation, with no room for mercy.

Amid the mayhem, the Pope stood in a sombre contemplation. He had always preached the message of unity amongst themselves and devotion to the Precursors. Still, he watched helplessly as his own people fought for survival at any cost.

Amid the brutality, one of the Archbishops, Elenora, a woman known for her calm demeanour, tried to mediate the situation.

"Stop this madness!" she cried out, her voice strained with desperation. "We are the faithful of the Precursors. We must stand together as one and remember our oath!"

However, her words fell on deaf ears, as the frenzy showed no signs of diminishing. Those who had once considered themselves brothers and sisters in devotion now saw only an opportunity to escape the planet's horrors.

However, Elenora didn't like being ignored. Even the Cardinals treated her respectfully, so who were these mongering fools to ignore her?

With a soft, enchanting hum, Elenora began chanting a spell. Her eyes began shining brightly as soon as she was finished, and with a wave of her hand, she began suffocating everyone around her.

Fighters indulged against one another moments ago were now on their knees, claspng their necks and chests as they struggled to breathe.

Tom Elenora watched on, and her cheeks turned bright red as she enjoyed the sight before her. It wasn't until she noticed the Pope's presence behind her that she stopped.

She let go of everyone and bowed before the Pope, who was akin to god for her. The Pope, on the other hand, gently patted her head before addressing everyone else there.

"I am well aware that our circumstances have grown more challenging," he spoke with the calm serenity of a sage. "Yet, it is during these trying moments that the strength of our unity is truly tested.

One cannot help but wonder what the Precursors would say should they observe their devoted followers faltering over the slightest hardships."

Upon hearing the Pope's words, their cultists hung their heads with shame. Upon joining the Cult, they swore off their attachments to life. But when death came knocking on their doors, they gave up on everything in a lust for life.

However, not everyone wisened up by the Pope's words. Noticing that no one was in his way, a cultist broke into an escape pod and fired it up.

Everyone was shocked to see the man defy the Pope and rushed to stop him. But the Pope smiled and allowed the man to leave. However, as soon as the pod left the ship's safety, it exploded. Killing the man inside.

The instant the escape pod burst into flames, the cultists focused on the Pope. His outstretched hand had been the catalyst for the explosion, leaving no room for doubt.

Clearly, the Pope had intentionally caused the escape pod to detonate, conveying a stark message to the rest: anyone attempting to flee the spaceship would face dire consequences.

But then, as they dealt with that, the ship was pulled into the planet, and they stumbled upon a gruesome sight that sent shivers down their spines.

Around the planet's southern pole, a colossal statue looked over them. But it wasn't any ordinary statue but a horrifying representation of the Precursors.

The statue was constructed entirely from bones that belonged to the people who had once inhabited this planet. Blood continuously flowed through the gaps, making the statue look more menacing.

As their ship landed and the Cultists were forced out of the vessel, they noticed the skeletal remains of the platoon that had been annihilated were strewn nearby, their bones slowly being added to the grotesque statue before them.

It was a nightmarish scene, and even the most devoted cultists found it challenging to maintain their composure.

"Who is that...?" Elenora mumbled when she saw someone beneath the statue.

Just as their fear and revulsion peaked, their despair suddenly became unexpected. Sitting on a morbid throne of bones beneath the towering statue was a being that defied all logic—a Precursor in flesh and blood.

The cultists, their expressions shifting from terror to awe, fell to their knees in a collective act of worship. They began to sing fervent prayers in the long-forgotten language of the Precursors, their voices resonating through the desolation.

Kro'Han, who had been poised to eliminate the cultists, hesitated momentarily. He couldn't help but be surprised by the lower beings' ability to speak in his language. Intrigued, he let them be, opting to engage with the cultists' leader.

"Who are you?" Kro'Han inquired.

The Pope, who had been on the brink of despair moments ago, immediately perked up.

"We are the servants of the Precursors, known as the Cult of Chaos," The Pope replied reverently. "Our sole mission is to find and revive the Precursors... but we never thought there would be a day when we'll see someone as great as your Lordship!"

"Is that so?" he said as a sinister smile curled at the corners of his lips.

Kro'Han found the situation so amusing that a smile crept across his face. The curse that had bound him to the planet hindered his pursuit of the remaining fragments of immortality and his quest to track down Ashton.

But now, with the Cult's assistance, it appeared that the solution to his predicament had presented itself.

Chapter 699 Soul Splitter (4)

In a dimly lit room on the war-torn Planet, Ashton, Ibis, Anna, and a few Xyrans sat together. The chaos outside had lessened as the Xyrans, Orions, and mercenaries worked tirelessly to clean up the aftermath of the fierce battle.

However, despite the ceasefire, the tension in the room was palpable. Before giving the control back to Ashton, Astaroth had assured him that there wouldn't be any hostility between the earthlings and the Xyrans anymore.

Ashton was sceptical of Astaroth's words but willing to trust him as long as they could stop the war.

"I know you'd have heard everything about me from Astaroth," Ashton started the meeting. "But I would like to clarify one thing before we take this meeting any further.

I do not trust you or your kind, and I'm only willing to talk things because the dumbass inside my head wants me to, and I respect him enough to see this through for once."

Ibis met Ashton's gaze and nodded. Astaroth had already warned her that Ashton was a bit hard-headed but had a soft side.

"I won't ask you to trust me either," she said. "However, I would like to help Astaroth and, by extension, you. Although Soul Splitter had never been used to separate two beings from one body, it could-"

While Ibis was explaining the procedure to them, Anna saw it was necessary for her to intervene. Her intuition was screaming at her that this friendliness was just a front and nothing more.

"Say what you want, Ibis or Iris or whoever you are," Anna taunted the Xyran. "I don't care if we're on the same side now, but I won't allow this alliance to work until and unless you answer my questions."

Ashton tried to intervene, but Anna was having none of it. After nearly losing Ashton, she had sworn that death would have to go through her before it could touch him.

As such, she wanted to clear every misunderstanding between them before Ashton got prepped for the so-called procedure.

But the tone Anna used for Ibis was a bit over the top, and the Xyrans did not take kindly to it. They were there to come to terms with the ceasefire, not to be ridiculed and stood up, their eyes blazing.

However, they lost all their strength a moment late and collapsed back into their seats. It was then they noticed Ashton's fingers that were pointed towards them.

"The next time you bare your fangs, my aura will crush your heads," Ashton sternly warned them. "Is that clear?"

The Xyrans begrudgingly nodded before Ashton let go of them. Ibis looked at her assistants and shook her head in dismay. Astaroth had already informed her about Ashton's limitless strength, and she knew it wasn't wise to trigger him.

"I'll be willing to answer any questions you might have, Succubus," Ibis replied with a smile, but her words were clearly a jab to Anna, who ignored her remarks as the Xyran had done the same.

"If you wanted peace, why did you attack us?" Anna inquired.

"We believed that Ashton was a sinful Precursor, much like Kro'Han, who had forcefully seized control of the kernel tower," Ibis replied without hesitation.

"We feared that in Ashton's hands, the tower could unleash havoc upon Earth, a planet that some Xyrans consider the abode of fallen heroes. As such, we came to stop you."

Ashton couldn't help but raise an eyebrow when he heard Ibis's response. The Xyrans wanted to protect Earth? But weren't they the ones responsible for the Planet's pathetic state?

Ashton was one of many confused about Ibis's statement. Astaroth had always known that humans were their enemies. Yet Ibis's statement was the complete opposite of what they had expected.

"Wait," he interjected, his brows furrowed in bewilderment. "but weren't the Xyrans the ones who caused the Great Disaster over a century ago? And didn't they abandon humanity because they felt challenged by us as if we were trying to replace them?"

Ashton's words took aback Ibis and hurriedly clarified, "No. Earth's mutant disaster had nothing to do with the Xyrans.

She continued, "We didn't abandon humanity out of revenge or jealousy. We never intervened with anything related to the Planet because of a promise to the Precursors never to destroy or interfere with Earth."

The room fell into an uneasy silence as the weight of this information settled in. Xyrans and the Earthlings were supposed to be each other's enemies. At least, that's what Ashton had learned from everyone involved with the Precursors.

But Ibis was claiming all of it to be false. But how could so many people be fooled into believing falsified information?

"Astaroth... you got something to say for yourself?" Ashton mumbled.

[I-I have no clue...]

Ashton and the Xyrans shared a perplexing moment of realisation, and even Astaroth was left feeling disoriented by the revelations. Something didn't add up, and it felt as if the memories of the events leading to war between the ancient civilisations point had been tampered with.

Moreover, Ashton had used [Heartbeat sense] on Ibis and knew she was telling the truth, making the situation more complex.

"Ibis, this is all so confusing," Ashton's voice was marked with uncertainty, "In my understanding, the Xyrans wanted to end the Precursors. Is it a lie?"

"Ashton, the Xyrans never attacked all Precursors," Ibis took a deep breath and looked directly into Ashton's eyes. "We were only at odds with the faction led by Kro'Han, also known as the Nyx, who wanted to rule over the galaxy.

She continued, "Meanwhile, the Xyrans supported the faction led by Lord Jo'Han to defeat Kro'Han. But like them, not all Xyrans were on board with the plan and turned to help Kro'Han, which possibly led to mixing up the history as you know it."

As soon as Ibis mentioned Ashton's father's name, Anna grabbed his hand, while Ashton didn't show any emotion to give away what he had hidden from Astaroth.

The Xyrans were unaware of the familial connection between Jo'Han and Ashton, so they didn't know the value of the revelation. But it finally made sense why Kro'Han wanted Ashton on his side.

lightsnovel

Had Ashton joined Kro'Han, it would have been the ultimate disrespect towards Jo'Han, and Kro'Han wanted his brother to turn in his grave.

Ashton's mind raced as he processed this new information. He had been led to believe that the Xyrans were his enemies, but now, it seemed that not all Xyrans were alike.

The history of the Precursor-Xyran conflict was far more complicated than he had ever imagined, and he no longer knew which side was speaking the truth.

Chapter 700 Soul Splitter (5)

Ashton realised talking with Ibis about the Precursors would only confuse him more, and an unclear mind was the last thing he needed at the moment when he was negotiating with Xyrans.

So, he halted their conversation, hoping to continue it some other time, and returned to the main topic.

Ashton's curiosity about the Soul Splitter machine, a device potentially separating his soul from Astaroth's, had grown steadily. After all, it was a technology no one but the Xyran possessed, and even then, only some Xyran were aware of its existence.

"So," Ashton began, "tell me more about the Soul Splitter machine. How does it work? I would like to know that much before stepping into your trap."

"I would never dare to trick you-" Ibis tried defending herself but in vain.

"Look, despite everything that's happened, I still do not trust you," Ashton intervened. "My other half does, but then he's a simp, so his words don't mean shit."

"Simp?" Ibis quizzed. "What is that?"

"...Ask Astaroth about it when he's back." Ashton shook his head. "Now, the soul splitter, what about it?"

"The Soul Splitter is a complex piece of Xyran-Precursor hybrid technology," she explained, choosing her words carefully. "It is designed to separate the soul or, as we call it, 'Quantaflux essence'. The separated souls can be rewound to their younger versions and recombined to make the host younger.

As such, we could apply the same principle to separate the intertwined souls of two beings, much like you and Astaroth. Once done, we can store them into separate bodies by cloning the original host's body."

Ashton nodded. Strangely enough, he understood every word that came out of Ibis's mouth. Also, she wasn't lying to him, as Ashton had already confirmed using [Heartbeat Sense]. But he still had some issues with the plan.

"So you're going to clone me?" he asked, to which Ibis nodded.

"I know this is not what you want to hear," she sighed. "But cloning you will significantly increase the possibility of a successful transplant."

"Either that, or it'll give you a precious opportunity to experiment with my DNA," Ashton said with a smile.

Ibis returned his smile. "I won't lie; the opportunity is too good to pass up. But I have promised Asta that I won't let any Xyran harm you while I'm alive."

"That's... awfully generous of you," Ashton chuckled as he leaned forward, his voice deepening. "And how are you planning to clone me?"

"That should be easy to accomplish," Ibis mumbled as she slipped a tablet towards Ashton. "This is the design of the Splitter; as you can see, it has an inbuilt property to clone the host."

Ashton was impressed as he went through the blueprint of the Splitter. While he wasn't a create blacksmith like Vulcan, he had learned enough to admire the beauty in the form of the blue before him.

"I see something called the resonance. What is that?" Ashton asked Ibis before returning her tablet to her.

"I'm glad you asked. The machine uses precise resonance frequencies to disrupt the soul bond between two individuals."

Ibis continued, "The process requires exceptional precision and control. But once the bond is severed, the two souls can be housed separately. It's a delicate and intricate procedure that I specialise in."

Ashton wasn't entirely sure how a frequency could separate a 'soul', but he was about to experience it, so there wasn't a problem with it. After all, experiencing something had always been better than being told about it.

"Alright, so far, so good..." Ashton replied before getting all serious again. "Do you have a Soul Splitter machine with you?"

Ibis hesitated for a moment before responding, "Yes and no. We have one, but it was damaged during the confrontation with you.

It, along with the mothership, sustained severe damage. Some parts of the machine need to be replaced, and I don't think we'll have access to the necessary components on Earth.

Tarik, who was busy looking at the Splitter's designs, shot Ibis a look. He did not like a Xyran ridiculing the planet he had grown to love, and the look of disgust was blatantly visible in his eyes.

However, Ashton seemed undeterred by Ibis's words, and a faint smile graced his lips.

"I don't know what Astaroth told you, but nothing is impossible in New Lycania."

"What do you mean?" Ibis furrowed her brow, puzzled by his cryptic response.

"Follow me," Ashton stood, leading the way out of the room and to the outskirts.

He guided Ibis and a few Xyrans toward the Eastern Palace, where he had stashed a trove of Precursor technology.

"Take a look and see if anything is useful to you." He said as he pushed open a door that Atlas and Raven were protecting.

As they entered the palace, Ibis was awestruck. The room was filled with advanced machinery and technology that even the Xyrans had never managed to accumulate in such quantities. Precursor devices, both familiar and unknown to her, were scattered throughout the chamber.

Ibis couldn't hide her amazement. "How did you acquire all of this technology?"

"I'm a Precursor," Ashton shrugged. "That should be explanation enough."

"I guess it is..." Ibis mumbled as she entered the room behind him.

Ashton's words hung in the air, a reminder of the formidable being he was. Once again, he instructed Ibis to borrow whatever she needed to repair the damaged Soul Splitter machine, as well as any other components that might be useful to them.

Without wasting a heartbeat, Ibis and her Xyran companions began gathering the necessary components. The room was filled with activity as they worked diligently to collect materials to repair the damaged machine.

Ashton, however, had one final warning for Ibis. He stepped closer as she was busy guiding her team, his gaze unwavering.

"Ibis, remember this—no more tricks. Not from you or any of your people," he said in a low, cautionary tone. "If you do, not even Astaroth would be able to save you."