

Zompiewolf 71

Chapter 71 - I'm Weak. Just Kidding! (3)

Back at the academy...

"Where the hell is he?" Lucas yelled at the top of his lungs.

It had been near an hour since they started the hunt to kill Ashton. But within that hour, Ashton had completely disappeared from there. He was nowhere to be found as if he had become one with the darkness.

In the meantime, the Grunta twins were busy eliminating as many students as they could for the sake of maintaining secrecy there. But even they were having troubles on their side. It would appear, the qualifiers from the other zones were a lot better than they had expected.

As a result, Lucas and the rest of the nobles were left on their own to hunt Ashton. Which to be honest was not possible, given the little amount of light they had to use. In the end, Lucas begrudgingly had to split their forces.

Unlike the last round, this time there was a time limit and they had to survive till the timer ran out. Which forced Lucas to make that decision. Otherwise, he would not have taken such a suicidal step. Especially after seeing how bad his plans had flopped the last time.

'These fools wanted to kill me and they can't even work together...!' Ashton shook his head while being concealed among the branches and leaves of a tree.

Ashton had not even made a single move, and yet he had shaken them and their resolve to fight. It was for that reason they couldn't see him even though he was right in front of them. Well, actually it was thanks to the darkness he was able to hide so well.

'Let's start the show then, shall we?'

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Name: Ashton Fenrir

Species: Zombie (Active), Vampire (Active), Werewolf (Active), Human (Deceased).

Status: Zompiewolf

Class: Unassigned

Title: [Defiant]

All genes have been activated successfully. Transformation to Zompiewolf is successful.

Ashton activated all of his dormant genes one after another. He did not want to simultaneously activate all the genes and suffer through excruciating pain. No matter how much his [Pain Tolerance] had levelled up, activating all of the genes together was still suicidal.

Everything was going according to his plan. However, the moment he activated the vampire and undead genes, the sharp nose of the werewolves caught his scent. Or the scent of an undead and a vampire to be precise.

'Undead and vampire? The director never told us anything about such beasts inside...' Lucas thought to himself and drew his sword, 'No... it has to be something else. Unlike anything I've never witnessed before.'

Lucas was the first to recognise the smell of hostiles as he was the closest to them. With it, a realisation dawned upon him. Since he was closest to the enemy... it meant he would be the one to get attacked first!

He wasn't a fighter! he could barely lift a sword let alone fight, even if his life depended on it. Which is, literally did at the moment.

"There's something here!"

Lucas roared at the top of his lungs but the people who were with him had already scattered. Even if they could hear him, it would take them a solid minute or more to even reach him. Which was more than enough time for Ashton to do what he needed to.

"I told you, I'll kill you first." Ashton's voice echoed through the dark as he swooped down from the tree and in front of Lucas.

"W-Wait! What happened to you?" Lucas stuttered and subconsciously started walking away from Ashton.

Although he could recognise Ashton's voice, his appearance had changed completely. Ashton's skin had turned ashen and his hair had grown a lot. Even though the mask was covering Ashton's face, it couldn't confuse Lucas whether the one standing in front of him really was Ashton or someone else.

However, the armour Ashton was wearing gave his identity away to Lucas. Still, at the moment, Lucas could only think about surviving and nothing else.

"You think you can waste our time by talking?" Ashton laughed but it wasn't a normal laugh either, just the sound of his laugh sent chills down Lucas's spine.

"Y-You don't know my f-family! They'll have your head i-if you even dared to t-touch me!"

"I'll burn that bridge when I get to it... for now, I'll be content by killing you."

Rather than trying to fight Ashton, Lucas threw his sword away and began sprinting towards the ones who were closest to him. But a second later... he felt something popped right behind him and the next moment he fell down.

He could no longer feel his body. All he could feel was a sharp pain in the back of his neck as if a night creature had bitten into his flesh. The pain was excruciating. Lucas wanted to scream, but no words came out of his mouth as he slumped down on his knees.

Lucas could feel the blood from his body being sucked away, at the same time chunks of his flesh were being eaten away as well.

"N-No... way..."

Those were the last words that came out of his mouth before his eyes went blank.

Ashton had been aiming for him since the beginning. As he knew out of all the students, Lucas was the weakest one and probably would not be able to fight back against him. Which was exactly what Ashton needed to level his undead genes up.

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You have successfully consumed the blood of a <Level 7> Weremutt.

You have been awarded 89% exp for a successful hunt.

Current vampire Level: 8

Current vampire skill points: 9

Current Exp: 89%

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

Required gene to learn the skill: Werewolf genes.

Required genes are present within the host's body.

Proceeding with absorption.

Due to the inefficiency of [Skill Absorption], only partial absorption could happen. As a result, the active skill [Incite (lvl 5)] has been turned into an active skill [Influence (lvl 1)].

(Note: The user is recommended to upgrade [Skill Absorption] as soon as they can.)

"So that's how it works. Interesting."

Ashton had been wondering for a while because he had never witnessed [Skill Absorption] work before. For now, it looked like whenever he would try to drink someone's blood, he would be able to absorb one of the prey's skills.

If complete absorption isn't possible, then the partial absorption would lead to the creation of a new skill for him. In short... he was getting way too overpowered.

The flurry of notifications did not end there. After all, Ashton had just received a new skill.

You have learned a new werewolf skill!

[Influence]: This skill allows the user to influence a selected target's decisions. However, whether the skill would be successful or not depends upon a variety of factors. Including but not limited to the type of relationship the two parties share, their affinity towards each other, how much intelligence they possessed and the level difference between them.

The higher the level difference, the lower the chance of successfully influencing the decision. This drawback can be removed by either upgrading the skill or by improving the relationship with the said person.

Grade: Low (level 1)

Cooldown: 10 Minutes

Can be used: 3 times a day

Activation Radius: 70 meters (Your targets must be within this range to get marked.)

Condition to upgrade the skill:

Use the skill to successfully influence the decision of 10 beings or use 15 skill points to level up the skill.

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The vampire genes weren't the only genes that got a boost. As planned, Ashton's werewolf and undead genes levelled up as well. He no longer had to worry about destroying the harmony between his genes. Which meant he could deactivate the rest of his genes and carry on with the exam.

Lucas's death could be blamed on a plethora of reasons, thanks to how weak he was. A creature could have attacked him, or his death could have been a result of a family feud. After all, the nobles were known to often fight amongst them to assert dominance and also to take over each other's territories.

However, considering the bite marks on his body, they would most probably think some kind of night creature must have attacked him. So all Ashton had to do was to give make them go in that direction and he would be cleared of any suspicion.

Thankfully, he knew exactly what he had to do. After all, a night creature would not be satisfied with killing just one of them. Which meant... Ashton would have to kill a couple more of them.

'Let's not take any risks... and level up the undead genes a bit more just to be sure.' Ashton thought as two idiots came walking right towards him, 'After all, it'll be a waste to not use this opportunity...'

The two nobles walking towards Ashton were clueless as to what had conspired there a few moments ago. They were only heading that way because they had heard Lucas yell that he had found someone.

"Wait," one of the two stopped the other, "I smell blood... someone must have fought here not too long ago."

"In that case, we should call the others- is that Lucas!?"

The two sprinted in the direction of Lucas's corpse.. Unaware of what was going to happen to them shortly.

Chapter 72 - Trouble In Paradise (1)

Moments later Chaos ensued. The medics who had been monitoring the heart rates of the students were sent into a frenzy when not one or two but three students flatlined one after another. Something terrible must have happened and as a result, the examination was brought to an abrupt end.

Several announcements were made asking the students to stop fighting and leave the arena as soon as possible. At the same time, several professors and high ranking students went inside the arena to investigate along with the medics.

However, none of them had any idea what they were about to witness mere moments later. As soon as they found the flatlined students, most of the students emptied their bowels right then and there.

Three half-eaten, mutilated corpses were scattered everywhere. it appeared as if the killed had left behind a human puzzle for them to solve as none of the corpses was intact. Some had a missing arm, while one of the corpses had been ripped open for the medics to do their forensic work.

Even though there had been deaths in the academy before, nothing like this had ever happened before. None of them could even fathom the horrors the student would have had to experience right before dying.

The only silver lining in this mess was, that no one from high-ranking noble families had been killed. Otherwise, their wrath would have been... troublesome to say the least. The low ranking Wring family did not have enough authority to go against the academy themselves. The same went for the other two families whose heirs had been killed like that.

However, a question still remained... who the hell did this?

"We will have to wait for the forensic reports. But from a glance, it seems it was a work of a night creature." Amaira Holder, the professor of martial arts mumbled.

For a master of martial arts, her body seemed frail. But that was because she had the ability of giantification. In other words, she could grow or shrink the size of her body upon will. Apart from that, her flaming red hair could also be used as a weapon of its own.

"How the hell would a night creature get here?" Meena, the monster tamer, asked Amaira.

Night creatures were her forte so it was obvious that she was interested in what was going on there. However, even she could not come up with a possible way a night creature would have gotten into the arena without being detected.

Such a thing was almost impossible. With the emphasis on 'almost'.

"It would be impossible unless someone deliberately let a creature inside." Amaira stated the obvious, "Also, I suppose we already know why someone would let a night creature inside an arena full of nobles."

"The resistance?" Suddenly the director's voice echoed behind them, "Apologies for being late. I had to inform the concerned families about the... mishap."

All of the professors and students along with the medic staff acknowledged the director with a quick but curt bow.

"If it's the work of a Night creature then it's entirely possible the humans were involved in the attack." Amaira cleared her stance, "On top of that, we have been receiving reports about their appearance in Contingent every now and then."

The director nodded along. What Amaira was saying indeed made sense. In recent weeks, the resistance had been desperately trying to cause issues in the city. It was for that same reason they had to tighten the security to prevent them from getting into the city.

Still, they somehow manage to cause problems after problems. That being said, sabotaging the second round of the exams would be a perfect opportunity for them to make their presence felt once again.

The theory Amaira had proposed fit right into what had happened there. But there was a slight problem... if a night creature had done this, then where the hell was it now?

The students were the only ones who had walked outside and the professors were sure nothing else could have escaped from the arena. When the Director pointed it out, none of them had an answer to that question.

"Could there be a secret passage leading out of here?" Meena stated a possible situation.

"Could you look around and confirm if that's the case? But be careful, the creature could also be lurking around." The director mumbled, "In the meantime, I will go and interrogate the students. Maybe one of them had seen or heard something."

"Yes, madam director!"

Even though the academy had not released any statement about what had conspired inside the arena, the people outside could think of what could have happened inside.

Also, considering that out of the 80 participants who went inside, only 77 of them walked out, was telling enough to make the others fear that the worst had happened.

As everyone kept talking about what could have happened inside, Ashton remained silent. Unlike the rest of them, there was no one accompanying him.

Disha and Donovan, both of them were missing and as much as Ashton was relieved about Donovan not being there, he was also weirded out by Disha's unannounced absence.

'Did they know about the noble's plan to get rid of me?' Ashton thought, 'As much as I hate Donovan, I don't think he would go against the mistress so blatantly just to get rid of me. As for Disha, well, she did not have any reason to hate me, did she?'

A lot of things were going inside Ashton's head. He wasn't worried about anyone finding out what he had done. There was no way someone could have found out it was him.

But the gazes of the nobles around him said something else. Unlike the others, these nobles knew that Lucas had been chasing after him with the intent to kill him. So, it was obvious Ashton could have killed them in 'self-defence'.

However, just thought that he could have killed three nobles on his own, kinda made it unbelievable. Most of them agreed that the mutt could have gotten to know about their plan and decided to hire some help.

"I'm glad you are alright." A familiar voice echoed in Ashton's head.

"Rose? Where are you?"

"Somewhere close. Listen, there's something you need to know but we can't talk here... even with my telepathy. I'll meet you tonight.. Till then, keep a low profile."

Chapter 73 - Trouble In Paradise (2)

"That's easier said than done." Ashton thought when he saw the director coming right towards him, "I can't promise anything but, I'll meet you near the cottage after midnight. If I'm late, then you'll need to figure out a different way to contact me."

"Understood. Take care." Rose replied before disconnecting her telepathy skill.

Ashton might be good at hiding his emotions. However, Rose's appearance had him a bit confused and worried. Especially, due to her shaky voice. Considering that Rose wasn't someone who would get flustered or worried easily, something big must have happened. Something big... which concerned him.

But before he could wonder about anything else, the director suddenly appeared in front of him, grabbed him by his arm before dragging him away from the crowd. The other students, even the seniors who were trying to maintain order there, were shocked to see that.

The director wasn't someone who would mingle with the students. Not even for someone's death. Until and unless someone had piqued her interest, they were treated as nothing more than filth... at least by her.

Thus to see her personally taking one of the students away must be because of two reasons. Either the student in question had been deemed as a protege of her, or he had done something terrible.

Still, as much as all of them wanted to know what was going on, there were a plethora of things that needed their attention at the moment. Like the rampaging knights of the participants who had just been killed inside.

Obviously, these knights didn't know for sure if their young lords had been killed. But since they were the only ones who hadn't made it out of the arena, they could guess what would have happened to them.

"By the right of knighthood, I order you to let me inside!"

The blue-haired knight from the Wring family tried to push the senior student who had been blocking his path. However, much to the knight's dismay, the moment he pushed the student aside, his face was firmly met with the fist of another student.

"You fcking knights never understand anything with words. So, I'll talk with you in a language you'll understand!"

Upon seeing one of their ranks being sucker-punched like that filled the other knights with rage as well. However, that rage quickly disappeared the moment they saw who had punched the knight in the first place. It was better to punch themselves to oblivion rather than trying to mess with the 'kid' in front of them.

Standing at 6'5", the caramel-skinned kid had a body that clearly overshadowed the knights. Not to mention the aggressive aura the kid had around himself. Some of the knights present there, were stronger than the kid was but they were afraid of incurring the wrath of the kid's big brother who was also present there.

"Carlile Jaeger... tsk!" The knight who got punched mumbled before spitting out a mouthful of blood.

No one wanted to mess with a Jaeger who although weren't nobles by birth, had more than enough influence to topple a dozen families like the Wrings in the blink of an eye. In front of them, none of the lower-ranking nobles families was worth more than filth itself.

"So? Who's next retards!!!" Carlile slammed his gauntlets together before scanning the crowd in front of him.

He was expecting the knights to put up some more resistance. But it looked like they had other plans. With a single punch, the raging knights had been calmed down, but all of it was temporary. The academy would have to break the news of the deaths sooner or later, and when that happened, the knight would definitely try to do something again.

"Tsk... what a bunch of pussies." Carlile sighed in disappointment before walking away, "Don't fucking dare to make noises again, or the next time I won't hold back."

Back with Ashton...

The Director did not speak a single syllable from the moment she started dragging Ashton, till the moment they were inside the Director's office.

"Sit down." She pointed at the chair in front of Ashton while she herself sat in the chair opposite to him.

"So-"

"Shut your trap!" The director immediately cut Ashton off, "I'm not here to listen but to warn you. The shit you just pulled inside... don't ever do that again while you are within academy grounds."

'She knows...?'

Suddenly, Ashton could feel his heart pounding within his chest. His breathing was normal, but to him, it felt as if the time around him had been slowed. He could feel he was about to have a panic attack.

Ashton was trying really hard to control his expressions and his thoughts. But to be honest, he wasn't sure if he was doing a great job at it. The blackout protocol should have shut everything down... then how the hell did she know what he did?

'No... she doesn't know. It's just an attempt to gauge my reaction and derive an answer from it.' Ashton quickly collected himself and moments later his pulse went back to normal, 'As long as she does not have proof, everything should be fine.'

"I don't know what you are talking-" Ashton had not even finished speaking when the director slammed something in front of him.

He looked down and realised that the director had him cornered. She wasn't guessing that he could be the culprit, but she actually had the evidence to back up her claims.

In front of him was a tablet, depicting his location inside the arena... right next to where he had killed the nobles. There was no way he was getting out of this mess. It was over...

"Seriously, how careless can you be?" the director shook her head and proceeded to delete the evidence right in front of him, "It was a good thing I had made up some BS about not wanting to record the battles inside, or else you would be dead right now."

Ashton was confused. What the hell was going on there? First, she dragged him there, then showed him the proof of his crimes before deleting them. And now she was chatting with him as if they were friends? What the heck was going on here?

"I know you're confused. I'll tell you everything when the time comes." The director mumbled, "But till then, try not to get yourself in trouble.... at least for the sake of your parents."

Chapter 74 - Bounty (1)

A few hours later, the excruciatingly long day was finally coming to an end. Within a span of hours, a lot of things had happened. For the first time in the history of the academy, the ranking exams of the academy had been cancelled.

As a result, the Director had to give a reason as to why they were doing so, thus she stepped up to inform everyone about the death of three students at the hands of an unknown beast. As it was to be expected, the backlash of releasing the news was quite huge.

The death of not one but three students was quite a scandal. Enough for numerous families to start problems there simultaneously. If they were not controlled, things would have inevitably led to a bloodbath.

However, the director had already prepared some contingencies to quell the rage of the nobles... by blaming it all on the Resistance. Her declaration was backed up by the reports they had received regarding the suspicious activities of the Human Resistance.

It was no secret that the resistance had been causing them some trouble in recent months. Thus, the director's accusations were believable.

Also, if it was the work of the resistance, then there wasn't much the weaker noble families could have done against the academy. But The director knew, just blaming it all on the resistance would not solve her problems.

As a result, she decided to bend the narrative to lead to a cliché path. The ones who had been killed were being hailed as their saviours, who sacrificed their lives to protect the rest of the students.

At that moment, they weren't useless people who died trying to get of Ashton, but warriors who saved the academy and everyone else at the expense of their own lives.

The director knew the nobles had a hunger for honour and praise. Thus, when she declared that a memorial service would be organised for the student who died because of that heinous terror attack, the nobles decided to cut their losses and accept the medals and other things on behalf of their sons.

To them, it was an opportunity to use the death of their sons to solidify their position in the society of the nobles. Even though they knew their sons would have died without putting up much fight. After all, who could have been more aware of their ability than their parents?

However, accepting the rewards and stuff, was all just a farce and nothing more. They were still planning to investigate what had happened inside the arena. No matter the cost. But since they couldn't openly go against the academy, they had to be discreet about everything.

Thankfully, they weren't the only ones intrigued by the strangeness of the situation. The Conundrum was going to investigate what happened as well. Most probably because something like this threatened the safety of the kingdom.

Back to the other important stuff. Since the exam had been cancelled, it was decided to assign the students their ranks based on the points they had scored in the previous round. As it was obvious that some of the nobles would not get a rank they 'deserved', thus they were not pleased with this decision.

But the director had chosen this as her hill to die on. In her words, she wasn't going to risk the safety of the students again, just for some stupid ranking system. As much as everyone else wanted to argue with that, none of them could refute the reasons the director had mentioned.

What would they do if the creature appeared once again? None of them wanted to die just to get some stupid high rank and rewards.

As a result, the students were assigned ranks based on their ranks in the preliminary exam. Which meant, the top performer from each zone was assigned S rank by default.

Thus, Ashton was made the first-ever 'mutt' to become an S rank student. Much to the dismay of some students and professors alike. Similarly, second and third places were assigned A ranks, and so on.

Afterwards, the students were immediately escorted to their dorm rooms based on the ranks assigned to them. Well, the thing was, all of the dorms were in the same building but on different floors.

The ground floor was where the D rankers had their lodging, while the S rankers had their rooms on the top floor. But that wasn't all. The difference between the living quarters was quite obvious.

While the S rankers got a room all to themselves, the A rankers had to share it among two, B rankers had to do it with three, and so on... with the D rankers sharing a room with five people.

To say that this infuriated nobles would have been an understatement. But there was nothing they could do about it. The next three years of their lives would be spent living like commoners.

This system seemed harsh but it was made so that it would motivate the low rankers to improve and grasp the top position. In a similar fashion, the S rankers would have to make sure to keep their place safe and secure.

It was the first time any of them had heard about this possibility to change their rankings. Well, it was because this rule was not in place before. The director had just implemented the new rules stating that just like before there would be an examination at the end of each academic year.

This exam would be treated as an opportunity for the students to change their rankings based on their capabilities and knowledge. The bottom feeders could suddenly become the rulers of the sky and vice versa.

As this rule was explained to them, the eyes of the low rankers started shining. They had finally found a ray of hope to get into a ranking that they 'deserved'.

But there was a strange situation... the nobles, they were targeting Ashton once again. While they were not being openly hostile with him, their eyes were clearly filled with rage and hatred. At least of the ones who were ganging upon him.

Ashton knew their task of killing him within the competition was left unfulfilled. On top of that, some of them believed it was Ashton who had killed Lucas and the others and not some strange night creature.

All of them had seen Lucas and the other two nobles chasing after him. Thus even if there was a monster, Ashton would have been targeted by the night creature as well. However, there wasn't a single scratch on his body, let alone a deadly wound.

Still, none of them had any way to prove that Ashton was the culprit. That was unless they were planning to confess that they were the ones who attacked him first. In which case, they would be the ones to land in trouble as Ashton's actions could have been easily framed as 'self-defence'.

Somewhere else...

"That bastard survived!?" Donovan slammed his fist on the ground, sending innumerable cracks throughout the surface, "How is that even possible!?"

"We don't have any idea..." Disha replied.

Although she appeared to be calm, she too was both baffled and scared of what was going to come next. The mistress had already found out about the attack, as well as the fact that Disha lied to her. Things were not looking good for them, at all.

The two of them were being accompanied by the knights of all the families who had joined in on the venture to kill Ashton. Under the orders of the Conundrum.

"That damned night creature ruined everything." Donovan massaged his temple, "We have to do something."

"How about we put a bounty on his head?" Alexander chimed in, "We cannot put a hand on someone from the academy. But if enough money was on the bastard's head, even the professors and the students of the academy might do our dirty work."

Donovan looked at everyone else in the room and it appeared they were in agreement. It was almost a sacred law to not attack a student of the Academy. Anyone who broke the law will have to go through a trial and all that jazz. Depending on the severity of the situation, they might even get executed.

However, the students of the academy were exempted from this rule unless they ended up killing someone. Still, this law was only bounded by the walls of Contingent. Once outside the city, anything could happen to anyone.

This meant that one of the other students could potentially 'injure' Ashton so badly that they would need to transport him elsewhere, preferably to the capital.

Once Ashton was out of Continent and the academy, anyone could kill him. But first, someone would have to somehow get Ashton out of the city. After that, he could go and kill the bastard himself.

"Enough money you say?" Donovan smiled, "How much do you think is enough?"

"Who knows?" Alexander shrugged his shoulder, with a smirk on his face.

"Stop playing.. You know exactly what I meant." Donovan rephrased his question, "How much would it take for your brother to do this job?"

Chapter 75 - Bounty (2)

Back at the academy...

Ashton had caught on to a few things. One of which was the strange disappearance of Disha and Donovan. They were supposed to meet him after the test was over. But strangely, none of them showed up even though it had been more than 6 hours since the examination was officially over.

Their strange behaviour got him thinking whether they were on the plan to get him killed too. He was probably overthinking things, however, he had decided not to ignore this hunch of his.

"They wouldn't go against the mistress... but this absence tells me otherwise," Ashton mumbled as he walked up and down his new room/penthouse, "Those 'slaves' aren't here yet either. Damn, is everyone trying to get me killed already? I haven't even made my first move yet!"

First the nobles, then Donovan and now even his so-called attendants. All of them were acting strange ever since the examination got cancelled. Leaving a bad taste in his mouth. Judging by how the things had been proceeding till now, he had already made a handful of enemies.

"Still, it's better that there's no one else here at the moment. I should try to enjoy my freedom for as long as I can. If I only knew what these nobles were planning to do next, life would have been a bit easier." He scratched the back of his head, "One thing's for sure. They won't let this matter go just like this. Not after I killed some of them."

Since their attack on him failed miserably, it was unlikely they would do anything rash without preparing themselves first. Also, as they would have to come up with some other way to get rid of him, it'll probably take some time for them to act out again. But it was only a matter of when.

However, since he was an S ranker now, they should be able to do anything to him openly. If they did, the director would definitely have his back, in case he ended up doing something drastic. Also, during this time of silence, it was up to him to grow even stronger.

"Status."

—

Name: Ashton Fenrir

Species: Zombie (Inactive), Vampire (Inactive), Werewolf (Active), Human (Deceased).

Status: Werewolf

Class: Unassigned

Title: [Defiant]

Age: 16 years

Gender: Male

Grade: F-tier (Evolution is possible)

Affiliation: Werewolves.

Level:

> Werewolf Level: 12

> Vampire Level: 9

> Zombie Level: 8

Stats:

HP: 2500/2500

Damage: 38

Armour: 25

Stealth: 25

Stamina: 40

Agility: 25

Intelligence: 15

Nature:

Bratty

"At least my stats went up by a bit. But it's still not enough. I can easily fight against students of my age. The seniors, on the other hand, are a different story."

Ashton could not think of one reason why the seniors would not give him a hard time there. The seniors having lower rank might not bother him as he was an S ranker. But nothing was going to stop those who were S rankers like himself.

That's why he needed to get stronger, and he had two ways to do so. The long method was to get his stats higher and upgrade his existing skills through actual combat. The second was to learn as many high-levelled skills as he could.

Thankfully, he had enough money to pursue the second path. But he was on the fence about going down the second path. There was no way a simple student like him could not have so much money to spend under 'normal' circumstances. On top of that, the whole academy knew he was a mutt so there was no way he could afford to recklessly buy skills or gears.

"That doesn't mean Mr Virgin can't get his hands on some skill in the black market. God, I hate that name!"

With that, Ashton's plan was clear. He was going to join underground fights during the night, earn money and buy some skills. While training diligently during the day and avoid raising any suspicions. That way, he could have had the best of both worlds.

Ashton walked into the balcony and realised the lights in the administrative building were still on. Also, the crowd of students gathered in front of the building did not seem to be reducing at all.

"Looks like the director is taking those fake interrogations very seriously," Ashton smirked.

For some 'strange' reason, the director had taken it upon herself to interrogate the students, rather than allow the professors to do it. As a result, the questioning session ended up dragging for hours. But none of the students had any clue regarding who or what the mysterious night creature was.

Obviously, all this questioning and stuff the director was doing, was just a farce. She already knew who was behind it and was using this opportunity to deviate everyone's attention away from Ashton or what he had been doing when Lucas and the other were killed.

However, not everything was merry in Contingent, thanks to her blaming the resistance for Ashton's deeds, she had effectively caused a state of emergency in the city.

The officers were continuously sweeping the streets for anyone who was remotely suspicious. To them, it didn't matter whether the ones they were catching were humans or not.

No one was safe from them. Well, if anyone was being honest, they already knew the officers were doing this more to feed the sadists within them than out of righteousness.

This was not good for Ashton. Feasting on the three of them might have taken care of his needs now. Still, he would need to go on a hunt soon. Probably sometime in the next week. But for some strange reason, nothing was bothering him after his talk with the director.

'Then... there was the talk about my parents.' Ashton sighed, 'The director knows them, she is also aware of my real name, but she won't tell me how the heck she knows all this.'

Ashton then averted his gaze away from the campus. Even though the city was ominously quiet, it was still as vibrant as ever. Ashton thought Maddencreek was beautiful, but this city had something more to it. Something that made Ashton feel like he was home even though he had only been there for a week or so.

Sun had already disappeared, leaving the darkness behind, while the stars had spread their twinkling blanket all over the city. Huge giant buildings stood beside the street, quiet as if taken over by monsters. Some windows gave out white and yellow lights, but the others were pitch black.

'Could they be alive somewhere?' A thought entered his mind but he quickly pushed it aside, 'Alive? How can they be alive after being sent away to the Undead and the Vampires.'

As the cool breeze gently touched Ashton's face, he realised even though he wanted to take revenge for his parents, he could not even remember their faces anymore. And whatever he could remember was super blurry, including their physical features.

'There's only one thing I can think of right now. I have to get closer to the director. If anyone can answer my questions regarding my parents, it's either her or the mistress.' Ashton thought before resting his arms on the railing, 'I have a feeling getting answers from the director would be much easier than from the mistress...'

"Still lost in your thoughts?" Rose mumbled before landing next to him like a ghost.

"My god! You scared the shit out of me!" Ashton exclaimed.

"And here I thought you would be happy to see me!"

"Yeah, yeah... what are you doing here either way?"

"We were supposed to meet, remember?"

"Oh right... sorry a lot of things happened and I completely forgot-"

"Don't worry. It wouldn't be wise for you to roam around now either way. The city is crawling with those officer bastards." Rose sighed before jumping on the railing, "Especially for you."

"What do you mean especially for me?" Ashton was a bit worried, thinking someone else might have found out that he killed the students.

"There's a bounty on your head."

"A what now? Who would place a bounty on me?"

Rose got silent for a second as the answer presented itself in front of Ashton.

"Of course. The Nobles, who else?" Ashton mumbled before shaking his head, "The lengths those bastards would go to. Why are they even doing this? Just because a mutt became an S ranker and they can't bully him anymore?"

"Relax. Nothing will happen to you as long as you're inside the academy. Also, I'll be here to help you out."

"Yeah... sure. Not sure whether you are aware of it or not. But outsiders aren't allowed inside academy grounds." Ashton scoffed.

"Don't explain those rules to me boya." Rose said with a smile on her face, "Also, who said anything about being an outsider?"

It roughly took a couple of seconds for Ashton to register what Rose had just said. She wasn't an outsider, which meant...

"You're a professor here?" Ashton asked in disbelief.

"Ding, ding, ding!" Rose winked at him, "Hello, I'm the professor of archaeology and artefacts here.. Also, starting tomorrow you'll be in my care."

Chapter 76 - Orientation (1)

The academy didn't consist of one building. Instead, it was more of a cluster of about a dozen buildings. Each of them had a special purpose of its own, but the first years were only allowed to access seven of these.

First was the hostel in which they were housed. The second was the educational building in which most of their theoretical courses would take place. The next one was the combat arena, it was the same building where the examination had taken place. It was generally used by the second and third years, but the first years were free to use it during combat training classes.

The fourth building was the armoury. Here the students could buy or sell equipment to and from any kingdom on the continent formerly known as Asia. Though they would have to pay a certain amount of tax deepened on the rarity of the equipment bought or sold and also to which kingdom the transaction was taking place.

Also, since this transaction could be easily tracked, not a lot of people preferred to use the armoury and instead used the services of the black market instead.

The fifth building was more of a supermarket than anything else. The students could buy anything they wanted from there. From things to eat to furniture and potions. The sixth building they had access to was the library. You know, to make sure the students have enough material to learn from and grow.

And last but not least was the administrative building. Although the building was named and used for administrative purposes of the academy. It also used all of its staff and hence it was by far the biggest building in all of the academy,

Although Ashton did not have the opportunity to visit inside the admin building, Rose was quick to give him a description. But she didn't need to say much other than the fact that the admin building was a culmination of all of the other buildings.

In other words, unlike the students, the staff did not need to visit different buildings to accomplish different tasks. They can do everything right under one roof. Ashton wasn't sure why she was telling him all that, but he thought it might get useful sometime.

After telling him all that, Rose decided to call it a night and headed back to her room.

"I guess the director has a weird choice in picking professors... just like the students," Ashton mumbled to himself before heading to sleep as well, "I wonder if she knows about Rose's secret as well? Honestly, it wouldn't surprise me even if she does."

However, as soon as his head touched the softest pillow he had ever felt, someone knocked on his door. Ashton was tempted to ignore the knock and go to sleep, he went ahead and opened the door.

But there was no one outside. Ashton was alarmed and quickly activated his perception skill. Still, he could not sense anyone.

"Weird... I swear I heard someone knock on the door." Ashton looked into the empty, dark corridor one last time before turning around.

It was then he saw a note under his foot. Intrigued by what it was, he carefully picked it up after using his detection skill. He simply wanted to make sure the paper wasn't rigged to explode or anything. There was something written on it... with blood.

"Welcome to the Academy, the place where you will be broken. With love, your end."

Ashton stood there with the paper in his hands. A moment later he was shaking. If anyone would have seen him, they would think he was shaking with rage or fear. When in reality was he trying his best not to laugh.

"Who the fck wrote such cliché stuff? 'Welcome to the academy, the place where you will be broken, blah blah blah'." He finally broke down laughing before tearing the note to bits, "Is this really an academy of battle arts or drama? Why give these idiotic warnings and shit? If you want to fight just come at me. Like you did during the examination."

Ashton yelled at the top of his lungs. He was pretty sure whoever had placed the note at his doorstep must have stayed behind to check his reaction. That's why Ashton made sure to give them a piece of his mind before walking back inside.

The next morning Ashton woke up with a bright face. Although he didn't need to sleep thanks to his genes, sleeping was always a fulfilling experience. He got up and was about to get dressed when he realised that he still didn't have the academy uniform with him.

Just then, a notification went off in the watch he was wearing. It was an official message from the director to all of the students. Their orientation ceremony would start in an hour at the admin building and they would be provided with their daily necessities items like uniforms, after that.

"Well, I guess I should get going then," Ashton mumbled to himself and headed out.

He knew everyone would be more or less hostile towards him, thus he had also made his peace with it. However, walking with hundreds of eyes on him was more uncomfortable than he had assumed.

Still, as he was an S ranker, none of them tried to pull any stunt. All they could do was to whisper behind his back. This included the Gruntas who were already being accompanied by half a dozen servants, even though they were only allowed to have two servants each.

Other than that, even some of the professors were looking at him with disgust. As if he was a pig who had had a mud bath. Just looking into their eyes made Ashton want to rip them off. But he kept his emotions within his body.

He went inside the auditorium and sat at his designated place when he heard someone walk up to him. It was Anna, she was looking great kempt as it was expected from a noble. However, unlike the rest of them, Ashton could feel she was not having any repulsive thoughts about him.

"Do you mind if I sit here?"

She asked in the politest voice Ashton had ever heard. It was in complete contrast with the voice of 'Bella'. If Ashton did not know for sure that Anna and Bella were one and the same, he could have been fooled quite easily.

"Sure, if you're comfortable with everyone hating you, then be my guest."

"I'm already used to that." Anna smiled and took the seat, "By the way, congratulations on achieving S rank."

"Congratulations to you-"

Ashton was about to congratulate her as well, but their small talk was interrupted by a mountain of a man whom Ashton had never seen before. But it was clear he was a second-year student.

"Look at this mutt. It hasn't even been a day and he's already flirting with the nobles."

'I guess I should get used to all this now..' Ashton sighed and ignored the senior.

Chapter 77 - Orientation (2)

"Mr Carlile, I think you have already been warned not to cause any troubles on campus." Suddenly Rose's voice interrupted them, "Or should I remind you of the consequences?"

"Professor Rose! I'm so glad to see you're doing well. How was your vacation?" Carlile's tone did a complete 180 as soon as he saw a professor in front of him.

"I was away from brats as yourself. Obviously, it's good. Now you should be off, Professor Meena wouldn't be pleased if she got to know you're flunking her class again."

"Right..." Carlile gave Ashton one last look then rushed outside.

"I hope you, first years don't mind the seniors." Rose waved her hand around, "They can be a handful sometimes."

She was simply pretending to talk with them as if she didn't know them. But at the same time, she and Ashton were having a different conversation altogether, thanks to her mastery of telepathy.

'I never knew it was possible to have two different conversations at the same time.' Ashton praised her, 'Feels kind of weird, to be honest.'

'I have had a decade's worth of practice, boya. You'll get a hang of it soon enough.'

'Who was he? If I had to guess, he's after the bounty. Isn't he?'

Much to Ashton's dismay Rose nodded in agreement. His first day had just started and so had the troubles. While Carlile was retreating, Ashton took a quick peek at his stats, and he was no joke. In fact, he was one of the strongest even among the seniors Ashton had seen so far.

Name: Carlile Jaeger

Species: Werewolf (Active).

Status: Werewolf

Class: Brawler

Title: [Powerhouse]

Age: 18 years

Gender: Male

Grade: E-tier (Evolution is possible)

Affiliation: Werewolves.

Level:

> Werewolf Level: 22

Stats:

HP: 9000/9000

Damage: 50

Armour: 35

Stealth: 20

Stamina: 70

Agility: 45

Intelligence: 21

Nature:

Rowdy

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

—

Apart from stealth, there was not a single field in which Ashton had an upper hand on Carlile. On top of that, Carlile already had a class and his skills were hidden. So Ashton wasn't sure if he could take Carlile down even if he tried to pull a surprise attack on him.

All in all, without Rose's help, Ashton was pretty much fcked, now that Carlile had accepted the bounty hanging over his head.

'Don't worry.' Rose reassured him, 'He will not dare to do anything against you. At least on campus. Still, it wouldn't hurt you to be vigilant. Now I should probably leave before anyone sees me chatting so merrily with two students I have never met before.'

'Understood.' Ashton gave her a curt nod as she left.

After Rose left, nothing much happened. Apart from all the hostile gazes, he was getting every now and then. But even those stopped once the orientation started.

The orientation lasted for about three hours. During this time all of the rules and regulations of the academy were once again told to the students to make sure none of them 'accidentally' broke any rules.

Still, the rules were also fed into their watches so if they wanted to check on anything they could do so at any time. Apart from that, there was a new rule in place which prohibited students from even sparring against each other without a professor's supervision and permission.

For some reason, this rule seemed to upset a lot of the students. They probably wanted an excuse to be hostile towards a certain someone, but now they might need to worry about getting a professor in on their schemes.

Ashton couldn't decide whether the director had placed this rule in effect to protect him or the ones who would inevitably try to attack him. Either way, the rule could have made his life a bit easier. Just a teen weeny bit.

"Now that we have discussed the boring things, shall we skip to the good part?" The Director said with a broad smile on her face, which was quickly reciprocated with loud cheers from the students.

The director did not seem to be stoic like most of them had expected her to be. She was quite... nice. At least for now.

"Just like every year, in three months time, you will get the first chance to experience a dungeon. I know, some of you have already been on an exploration trip. But this trip would not be one meant for exploration, but subjugation." The director continued before explaining the difference between the two.

Exploration and Subjugation. These were two types of dungeon trips one could be a part of, as long as they met a certain criterion.

The Exploration trip was for scientific and knowledge purposes to know more about the night creatures and ways to counter them.

These trips were held in dungeons that had been cleared recently and usually, scholars are accompanied by a few 'adventurers' just in case some night creatures had survived after the Subjugation squad had cleared the dungeon.

That being said these trips were usually the safest and hence the adventurers participating in Exploration received less monetary compensation for their services in comparison to the adventures who take part in subjugation.

As for the Subjugation trip, it was just as the name suggested. The subjugation squads were strictly made of professional adventurers with an exception of some porters and other supporting members. Whenever a dungeon appeared, these teams were contracted by an organisation known as 'The Guild'.

After being contracted, it was the job of the squads to get rid of the monsters and if they were successful they were awarded rewards as mentioned in the contract. However, not all of the dungeons were operated in this way.

Only the high tier dungeons were sold off to squads on a contractual basis. Meanwhile, the rest of the adventurers were allowed to head into lower-tier dungeons by themselves and were rewarded in terms of how many monsters they hunted down, the levels of the monsters, etc.

A lot of money could be earned by doing this. But the adventurers could always lose their lives in the dungeons. It was a lucrative job, but one with lethal occupational hazards.

"That being said, I hope you all will be prepared for your first subjugation trip in three months. Till then work hard, or you might not get the chance to participate. That's all for today, and do not forget to collect your uniforms and badges!"

With that, the orientation ceremony came to an end.. Leaving the students both worried and excited about their new journey.

Chapter 78 - First Lesson: Fight! (1)

A couple of hours passed and the students were called in for their first and only lesson of the day: Combat training.

Upon seeing their weekly schedule, Ashton realised they were going to spend a lot of time in the combat arena. Except for Sundays, they had to train there for at least two hours a day. Which to be honest was nothing compared to how much time he had spent on training while under the Mistress's wings.

The way he saw it, fighting for two hours was just basic warm-up. Still, spending two hours improving his physical abilities was a much better option than focusing their time and effort on preparing potions.

Yup, they had a potion class as well, where they would apparently be taught about conjuring potions and their uses in real-life scenarios. Along with some other bunch of alchemy bullshit. Ashton knew the

worth of potions, but despite that, he just couldn't seem to get why did they have to learn how to make them from scratch.

Despite how he felt about potion classes, apparently, they were quite popular. At least from what he had heard from Rose. They also had much more students in that department than in battle arts, which he thought was weird.

Well, there was one more thing Ashton was getting weirded out by.

'Why do these people stare so much? Don't they have anything else to do?'

This time, however, their eyes weren't filled with disgust or hostility. But with envy and a weird look... as if they were looking up to him with respect. The students around him were very intrigued by him. Personally, Ashton could not have blamed them. After all, most of them would want to have the uniform he was wearing.

The academy had wasted little to no time to show how the S rankers were favoured over the others. This fact was clear just by the uniforms they had. While everyone had a white uniform, the S ranker were the only ones who had both black and white colours in their uniform to separate them from the crowd.

The S rankers weren't the only ones who had different uniforms. The student council, as well as the disciplinary committee, had their own uniforms as well. In Ashton's opinion, their uniforms were much flashier than the S rankers with black and gold colour.

Still, being an S ranker was considered to be more prestigious than being a part of either of those groups. Thus wherever he went with the uniform, most of the students either looked at him with respect or with fear. This look only lasted till they got a good look at his face and their demeanour would change entirely.

It would appear that he was already quite famous on the campus. Thanks to him being a Mutt and having a bounty on his head. The looks were quite disturbing, but slowly Ashton was getting used to it all.

After another minute or two of walking, he had reached the arena once again. The building looked just as vibrant as it did during the examination. Except now there was a golden plaque right in front of the entrance boasting the names of the students whom he had killed yesterday.

'The academy sure is quick to feed bullshit to the ego of the nobles.' He shook his head and stood by himself in a corner.

There was still five minutes remaining before the class would begin, but there were already quite a few students gathered there with more of them on their way. However, it seemed the professor had a different plan altogether, the doors to the arena opened up before time and out of it walked the professor.

A moment later, a red-haired woman walked out. She was already dressed in a black combat suit, unlike the ones Ashton had seen before. On top of that, the professor was a literal giantess about 7'10" tall. Although Ashton did not check her stats, he knew if she wanted, she could have picked them up and thrown them away like a sack of potatoes.

"The hell are you brats waiting for? Get your sorry asses in before I start kicking them!" The professor roared at the top of her lungs as the students hurried inside like a bunch of scaredy cats.

The second all of them were inside, she closed the doors once again. The arena had changed completely. The forest had been replaced by half a dozen rings along with several gym equipments scattered around everywhere.

"But professor, what about the other-"

"Rule one: You will only speak when spoken to. Is that clear?" The professor immediately cut the student off, "Rule two: Answer when I ask something. I said IS THAT CLEAR?"

"Yes, Professor!" The student roared back in unison.

"Good. Now allow me to introduce myself. I am Professor Amaira Holder and I will be teaching you basic combat techniques for the next six weeks." Amaira said in a loud and firm voice, "It is up to me to make some warriors out of this batch of pipsqueak and believe me, I'm not going to make it easy on anyone of you. Whether you are noble or a high ranker."

For some strange reason, Amaira was looking at Ashton while she said that, even though he wasn't the only S ranked student present there.

"Also, it is up to me to select students who will be a part of the Subjugation squads based on their performance. So be sure to give it your all in case you want to earn some quick bucks and my respect. Are there any questions?"

Several students raised their hands but Amaira completely ignored them and gave them the first task of the day... run a hundred laps around the arena, without stopping or slowing down.

"While your strength is important in any fight, your stamina and agility are equally important as well. If you can't even do this within thirty minutes then pack your bags and leave. This academy is not for gentle flowers like you."

All of the students got to work but as the S rankers were about to join them, Amaira stopped them.

"That basic exercise is not for you guys. Unlike them, the eight of you will head into the arena for duels. I want to see what the S rankers this year have in store for me." She said while scanning them.

"First will be you and you. Get inside the ring. Three-minute rounds, the one who knocks out their opponent wins. You are not allowed to use your abilities. Break that rule and I'll break your bones in half. Now go."

Just like that Ashton and another guy were set to fight one another. Ashton took a quick glance at his opponent before heading inside the ring. Standing at 5'8" the black-skinned kid had an unfriendly feeling around him.

He had an angular face, a short nose, and small lips. His brown eyes were puffy and the eyebrows were missing. His short hair appeared to have been burned away, which would also explain the scar he had on his forehead. His physique was somewhat similar to Ashton's with well-defined muscles all over his body.

"Are you morons ready?"

Both of them nodded and got in their battle stances.

"So, you accept you are morons?" She shook her head, "Just start the fight...."

Chapter 79 - First Lesson: Fight! (2)

—

Name: Hugo Del Rio

Species: Werewolf (Active)

Status: Werewolf

Class: Unassigned

Title: [Rogue]

Age: 16 years

Gender: Male

Grade: F-tier (Evolution is possible)

Affiliation: Werewolves.

Level:

> Werewolf Level: 10

Stats:

HP: 1900/1900

Damage: 30

Armour: 20

Stealth: 12

Stamina: 42

Agility: 20

Intelligence: 16

Nature:

Purist

Abilities/skills/spells:

Werewolf Skills:

>> Pounce: This skill allows the user to pounce on a target from a great distance. Causes 109 HP worth of damage to 5 targets at once. Successfully hitting the target with this allows the user to cast the skill once again after 5 seconds. Otherwise, the skill would go into the usual cooldown period.

Grade: Low

Cooldown: 1 Minute

Activation Radius: 5 meters (Your targets must be within this range to get marked upon a successful hit.)

>> Transformation (Half Wolf)

—

'Hugo... he isn't half bad.'

That was the first thought that crossed Ashton's mind. Even though Hugo did not have half as many skills as he did, the sole fact that he was level 10 made him a bit different from the ones Ashton had fought so far.

But there were things that made Ashton hate him a bit. Hugo, just like most of the nobles was a purist as well. Which meant, Hugo would be looking down at him just like the rest of the S rankers were. However, Ashton could have been happier now that he was given a stage to put these idiots into their place.

It was a perfect opportunity for him to silence them and their criticism of him. There was one thing that Ashton had been made aware of after overhearing some students. It was the fact that most of the students didn't believe he deserved to be an S ranker.

Mostly because they had gotten to know how the Gruntas were stripped of their positions in the first round and Ashton was 'awarded' the first place, rather than 'earning' it. This fact coupled with him being a mutt, caused resentment in everyone. They even had a new nickname for him, 'Fake Ranker'.

But that was all they could do for now, because it did not matter whether they liked it or not, Ashton was an S ranker whom they couldn't put their hands on. But they weren't bound by this rule during combat training.

"Let's see what the fake ranker has to offer," Hugo mumbled and launched himself towards Ashton at an insane speed.

"What the-"

It was thanks to [Battle Tactics] and [Reflex] that Ashton was easily able to dodge the incoming attack. However, it was clear to anyone that Hugo had used his ability even though professor Amaira had made it very clear they were not allowed to use their abilities.

How was Ashton so sure about it? Well because he was more agile than Hugo, thus if he had to use [Battle Tactics] and [Reflex] simultaneously just to dodge his attack, it meant Hugo had used [Pounce].

"Professor!?" Ashton stared at Amaira hoping she would do something, but she was unfazed.

"What are you barking for?" She yelled back at him as the rest of the S rankers had a smirk on their faces.

At that moment it dawned upon Ashton what was going on there. All of them were in on it... those fucking purists. The professor was just as biased against him as the rest of the rankers. That's why she had intentionally ignored that Hugo had just used his ability.

"Nothing... professor." Ashton said with an apologetic look on his face, 'You wanna play dirty? Fine by me.'

Since it was his first day there, he did not want to cause any problems. But now that it had come to dirty playing already, he had no choice but to entertain them as well.

'Use your abilities as you please, but don't blame me for what will happen now.'

These fools were trying to stir up a hornet's nest, so it was obvious the hornet would sting them sooner or later. Still, Ashton was sure that if he used any of his active abilities, the professor would find an excuse for him to get thrown out of the academy. Thus he had to depend on his passive skills only.

'Nah, these idiots don't even deserve that. I'll keep the passives to strictly defend myself. That way, they might actually stand a chance to win.'

"Come at me when you are ready." Ashton flexed his neck while taunting Hugo.

"Why? Are you afraid to charge at me-" Hugo was still in the middle of speaking when he got kicked right in the face.

'Of course, you won't come at me now that your skill is in cooldown. Fcking bastard.'

A gust of wind was the only thing felt by the spectators as Hugo was sent flying to the edge of the ring, and in his place stood Ashton with his right leg still in the air. Blood gushed out of Hugo's mouth as his lower jaw had been visibly dislocated.

All that... with just a simple kick. However, Ashton wasn't done yet. The rules were clear, the fight would go on till one of them got knocked out and Ashton was planning on making an example out of Hugo there. How could he let the fun end so early?

A second later, Ashton launched himself back at Hugo. But this time he went for Hugo's kneecap. With a herculean sidekick, he managed to shatter Hugo's left kneecap before he could even try to defend himself.

Hugo was in a hell of pain, but he couldn't even scream properly as his broken jaw didn't allow it. In less than a minute, he went from a fully functional competitor to a crippled teenager. At that moment, it dawned upon him... he was completely at Ashton's mercy.

But his pain was far from over yet. He would make a good example if he was still looking at him with eyes of disgust, would he? However, before Ashton could put an end to Hugo, someone grabbed the back of his collar and threw him away. It was none other than Amaira herself.

"The hell do you think you are doing?" She yelled at him filled with rage, "This was supposed to be a duel, not a butchery!"

"Did I break any rules?" It was Ashton's turn to smirk, "How is it my fault if his bones are made of clay rather than calcium?"

Amaira knew Ashton was correct, so she could not even punish him. All she could do was to stare daggers at him and nothing more.

"I'll take Mr Del Rio to the infirmary. Till then, none of you is allowed to lay a finger on each other. None of you!" Amaira yelled before effortlessly lifting Hugo up and rushing outside.

'If you play with fire, you will get burned. What's the fault of the fire?' Ashton thought to himself before smiling, 'Oh look, that moron gave me some exp.. Nice.'

Chapter 80 - Slaves... Again.

The rest of the lesson was spent without any problems. At least for Ashton. Amaira was pissed because well, she wanted to teach the mutt a lesson. Instead, it was her who was taught a lesson by the director.

Not because she was targeting but because of how terrible Hugo's condition was. Even with magic, it would take him a couple of weeks to get back to his feet and that too on his first day in the academy.

Also, the Del Rio family was angry but they could not blame Ashton as he had not broken any rules. He just did what they were told to and fought their son. As a result, all of it was blamed upon the professor for not stepping in sooner during the duel.

Amaira might have been pissed, but something good came out of it. The student of his year got to know it wasn't a good idea to mess with him directly. As once Ashton stopped holding himself back, there wasn't much they could have done to stop him.

But it wasn't like Ashton was left unpunished. He was called into the director's office, everyone thought he would get lectured on and then suspended. But nope. he just got a slap on the wrist and was told to take others' strengths into consideration while duels.

This annoyed some of them including Amaira, but even she knew there was nothing more she could have done on her own. Not after the warning, she had received from the director.

After all, that mess was sorted out, there wasn't much to do. They did not have any more lessons for the day and it wasn't like there was anything these new students could have done either. So they headed back to their dorms where a surprise was waiting for them.

The seniors wanted to conduct their annual ritual of ragging the new students. However, the S and the A rankers were left alone. Mostly due to the fact most of them had a strong family to back them up and the low ranking seniors did not want to anger them.

However, somehow Ashton did not make the cut and was called into the field next to the arena just like the rest of them. But him being him, he ignored the seniors and went inside his room. He had already had his share of fun today. The seniors would have to wait for some other day to become his playthings.

"Why do they think I need to follow their every command?"

He Sighed heavily before going into the balcony to enjoy the sunset. After all, it was the only time he got to enjoy the sun without suffering from his stat reduction and the bit of migraine which accompanied it.

"What should I do next? I can work out or I can try to scout some hunting areas nearby..."

Since Rose was a part of the Academy, he could depend on her to gather his food supplies. Not the ones he had during the day, but his late-night bloodied feast of blood and bones. Still, he wanted to be independent and hunting by himself was the right answer for that.

"Maybe I should visit the black market instead? Oh, I forgot I can't do that because of the patrols." Just then there was a knock on his door, "I swear if it's that love letter crap again, I might kill someone tonight."

But to his surprise, it was something entirely different.

"Mistress, why are you here?" Ashton blurted out absentmindedly.

"I am still your guardian. At least, according to the academy. Here, I got you some food."

She handed a nicely wrapped packet to Ashton before walking inside as if she owned the place. Her bodyguards and the human slaves followed behind.

'Here goes my freedom... damn it!'

"A nice place you got yourself here. Also, congratulations on achieving S rank." The mistress mumbled and sat down on the bed like she always did.

"None of it could have been without your help and efforts, mistress."

Just saying those words made Ashton want to puke his guts out and rip them apart himself. But he had to do what he needed to. Even if that list included him sucking up to her.

"So how was your first day? Eventful I hope?"

"By eventful if you mean to have a duel and win, then yes."

"Now that's something I would like to hear about. But come sit by my side first."

'There's the perverted woman I know and hate... fcking always wanting to get close to me.' Ashton thought with a forced smile on his face.

But rather than doing as she asked, he pulled a chair and sat in front of her instead before telling her what had happened in the arena today.

"What was the name of the other kid you said?" The mistress asked once Ashton was done recounting the tale.

"Hugo Del Rio."

"You beat the crap of a Del Rio?"

"Should I be concerned or anything?"

It had just occurred to him that he had fought a noble, and he did not have any idea about his family background. He might have been strong enough to fight them but if their families started coming after him, he would be in quite a lot of trouble. At least till he was strong enough to take care of them by himself.

"Not at all. Del Rios are nothing special." The mistress shook her head, "In fact, you did a good job breaking that kid's bones. All of those fckers deserve something like that to happen to them."

Ashton did not try to inquire much about the Del Rios afterwards. But judging from the way the mistress talked about them, he got a rough idea that her relationship with the Del Rios was not good. That was the only reason she could be happy.

"Now coming down to why I came here." The mistress mumbled in a serious voice, "Have you seen Donovan or Disha recently?"

"No. Not since yesterday when they came to see me off for the examination."

"Hm... that's all I needed to know." Saying so the mistress got up and prepared to leave.

"Is something wrong with Disha or Donovan?"

"Nothing that you need to be concerned about. Work hard while you're in the academy. Also, try not to instigate a lot of people."

She continued, "Having too many enemies at a young age does not work for everyone. The slaves will stay here to help you out as well.. No need to thank me."