

## **Zompiewolf 81**

### Chapter 81 - What Is A Blessing? (1)

The next morning...

"Good morning students, I hope you all enjoyed your first day at the academy. But let's get a bit serious about your studies, shall we?"

A man who appeared to be in his late fifties was standing in front of them on a podium. He was about 5'9" tall with a hunched over back. He also had pale and wrinkly skin which further added to his old look along with his eyes that were closed shut as if the eyelids had been glued together.

Despite his old appearance, there was not a single strand of white hair on his head or his ground-touching beard. Although, he might have dyed his hair as black as his curved back and support stick gave away his old age.

"I am professor Merlin Bancroft. You are free to call me by my first name or last name. I wouldn't mind at all." Professor remarked, "Now how many of you are excited to know a bit more about our origins?"

It was their first theoretical class about the history of the virus and the world that came into being because of it. Also, in this class, they would be able to get a better understanding of their blessings and how they worked. So a lot of students were excited to learn about that.

Well, Ashton on the other hand could not wait to head out of the class. The mistress had already taught him a bit about the world where humans once dominated everything and what happened afterwards. To be honest, the things she said while teaching him, sounded unbelievable if not downright ridiculous.

After all, how could the weak humans rule over the entire world when they couldn't even defend themselves against vampires, werewolves and the undead? And chose to run away instead? They supposedly had weapons that could wipe away entire nations and yet could not get rid of a fucking virus? How did any of that make any sense?

"Mr Bismark, I know theoretical knowledge might seem a bit boring to hot blooded individuals such as yourself. But I ensure you, if you pay enough attention you'll find this class to be a bit more interesting than you presume." The professor said with a wide smile on his face.

"My apologies Professor Bancroft. My mind wandered off for a second." Ashton was being polite to Merlin because well, he wasn't a purist like Amaira.

"Don't worry about it. I know how it feels to have all that hot blood flowing through your veins. So, let me ask all of you a question. What is a blessing?" Merlin asked while his wise eyes scanned the class, "You don't have to be correct, just make an attempt. Oh, Ms Swan, would you like to answer?"

"Basically, a blessing is the source of our power and also our mutation. Right?"

"Correct. But not entirely. That was a good attempt Ms Swan, you may sit down now." The professor said before turning his back towards them, "A blessing is indeed the source of our power as well as the cause of the mutation of our genes."

"But there is something more. If it was just as easy as to describe what a blessing truly was, we would have spent so much money and time trying to decipher its secrets."

Merlin continued, "Despite a century having been passed since our people received this blessing, we have little to no knowledge about who or what granted this power to us. Some call them gods, some devil. But the term by which they refer themselves to us is as 'Administrators'."

The moment Merlin uttered the word 'Administrator', the students started whispering amongst themselves. It was clear some of them already knew about the existence of Administrators, just like Ashton did. However, Ashton decided to keep that knowledge to himself.

After hearing the way Merlin was comparing Administrators to gods, Ashton knew revealing the information that he knew an administrator would only cause him problems.

In the meantime, Professor Merlin gestured for everyone to calm down. It was a good thing that the students were excited to learn something, but babbling amongst themselves would only cause chaos and nothing else.

"Looks like you young ones are already aware of the admins. Good, excellent even. It makes my life as a teacher a bit easier haha." Merlin mumbled while stroking his beard, "Then I shall ask you, what or who do you think is an administrator?"

The entire class was silent. None of them had any answer to Merlin's question. All they knew was that beings called Administrators existed and only the ones who had ascended were able to establish some sort of contact with them.

"No one? Well, it's to be expected. Merely talking to an administrator would mean you are destined to do great things in future. You could become the messiah or the devil. But regardless you would achieve things no one ever could."

He continued, "To be honest, there's not much we know about blessings or the administrators apart from the fact that they can be divided into several different colours. Can anyone name them?"

"Blue, Red, Yellow and Black." To everyone's surprise, it was Ashton who answered the question.

"Correct. Mr Bismark. See, I told you the class would get a bit interesting if you pay enough attention."

"I have never heard of anyone actually having a black blessing. It's just a stupid myth." One of the other students chimed in.

"You never know that, Mr Kevinson. However, what you said is somewhat true." Merlin nodded while leaning over his ancient-looking stick, "No one has any proof of a black blessing to ever exist. But it is said that the first ones to ever receive a blessing were the ones who had black blessings."

He continued, "Our progenitor, Lycaon is said to be one just like Dracula is the one who apparently had a black blessing amongst the vampires. As for the undead, well, most of them possess little to no intelligence so it's next to impossible to find out who was their progenitor."

'No wonder Lucifer told me not to mention anything about me having a black blessing. They would never stop hunting me down if they know I had a blessing only heard of in myths.' Ashton got lost in his thoughts, 'Also, it finally makes sense why I got the black blessing in the first place.'

According to what he could derive from Merlin's talks, the first beings of a kind got the black blessing. Which meant since he was the first-ever Zompiewolf, he had the black blessing as well.

But there was an issue. Unlike the other blessings, there was no way for Ashton to obtain any information about the unique traits of a black blessing.

For example, those who had a Red blessing had superior physical abilities than the others. Those with a Blue blessing had exceptional talent in using mana and related abilities. And finally, those with a Yellow blessing were the jack of all trades. They could use mana related skills as well as physical abilities but were often not able to master either of the two styles of combat.

'It seems like those with black blessing can use both mana and physical abilities as well. That's why Lucifer told me to say I have the yellow blessing whenever asked. What a sly person..' Ashton shook his head and got his head back into the lesson.

## Chapter 82 - What Is A Blessing? (2)

Merlin was correct when he said the longer they'll listen to him, the more interesting his lessons would become. The two hours in his class were spent like two minutes. The class got over so quickly, it honestly left the students wanting for more even though Merlin did not do much and simply talked.

In the end, they learned a lot of things about Blessings and their growth. One of the most important things they learned about was the classes. Just like at level 10 when they received a skill to pick, upon hitting level 15, another such choice would be given to them.

Based on the skill they picked upon hitting level 10, they would be offered 3 or 4 choices to pick their class from. Once they had picked a class, they would receive some bonus stat points and some beginner skills related to the class. From then on, they would receive new skills every 10 levels they earned all of which would be associated with their classes.

This point got stuck with Ashton. Not having a class was hampering his growth already and he had to depend on buying skill cards or absorbing them from others using [Skill Absorption]. Both of which were not feasible for him as he could not blindly spend his money nor could he walk around as a vampire absorbing skills.

However, after unlocking a class, he would be able to earn skill cards by simply levelling up which was a piece of cake for him. Merlin also wanted to tell them more about how one could prepare for their 'evolutionary' stage which only one in a hundred thousand could achieve.

Ashton was once again interested in the topic as he was going to evolve sooner or later. Thus having information about it would have definitely helped him. However, the class got over so they had to leave the topic for the next week.

"Mr Bismark, a moment please." Merlin stopped Ashton as everyone headed towards their next class.

"Yes, professor?"

"You seem to be uncaring, but I couldn't help but notice the attitude of others whenever you spoke. Have you been causing trouble with your classmates?"

Although Merlin was simply asking him a question. Ashton couldn't help but think there was something more about it. As if Merlin already knew the answer to his question and was simply testing Ashton.

"Um... well, there is a thing. I used to be a human, so I'm not of some great werewolf lineage. That should be enough to piss these purebloods and on top of that I'm an S ranker so... you get the point." Ashton replied while scratching the back of his head.

"Haha... youngsters these days are hilarious. Purebloods? There is not a single werewolf who can claim to have pureblood. After all, all of us are mutated beings. In other words, we are all evolved from humans themselves."

"I can never understand what goes inside the head of these nobles," Merlin further remarked, "Either way, my boy, I can see a bright future ahead of you. Don't let others' foolery stray you from the path of excellence. Now off you go, you should not be late for your first class."

Ashton nodded cheerfully and left the room, 'Maybe theoretical lessons are not that boring.'

[You have learned something new. Knowledge had been boosted by 2 points.]

[Knowledge: 15 ---> 17]

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'I take it back. Classes are super boring.'

Everyone said potion classes were super exciting and popular. However, even though Ashton was sitting in one such class, he couldn't help but feel as if he had been lied to. On the first day of the class, Professor Kakaroff assumed that they knew everything about the wolfsbane potion. Something that most of the werewolves had stopped using decades ago.

During the initial days of mutation when the virus had struck earth for the first time, the Wolfsbane potion was like an elixir that helped the werewolves tame their animalistic nature. Consuming the potion during transformation proved to be the only effective way for the werewolves to keep their instincts in check.

One could also say it was like morphine but only for the werewolves. Since it was made using highly poisonous ingredients if anyone else were to consume the potion they would die a horrific and painful death.

The same went for the werewolves as well. If the potion was not brewed correctly, consuming it could paralyze and in some cases even kill the consumer even if they were a werewolf.

The professor for potion studies, Kakaroff Ivanov, did not give a fuck about whether it was their first day or not

Judging by his physical appearance, he was more like a ruddy-skinned bald dwarf than a werewolf with being about 4 feet tall. His eyes were nearly visible through his bushy eyebrows and he appeared to be quite... weak. But that did not stop him from being an asshole to absolutely everyone.

Although he was a purist, it didn't seem like he hated Ashton anymore than he hated the rest of them. The way he acted was more as if they weren't students but intruders in his class and for the first time in his life, it appeared the nobles and Ashton had found a common ground to stand on... and hate Kakaroff.



"Oi you S ranked mutt, tell me what this is?" Kakaroff threw a rock at Ashton which the latter effortlessly caught thanks to his agility.

However, even before Ashton could get a chance to say something, Kakaroff interrupted him.

"Of course, you can't tell that it is. What else could I expect from a mutt? Hand the thing over to the moron standing next to you. She won't be able to guess it either but gotta give them all a chance to waste my time."

'This little fcker...!' Ashton had enough of Kakaroff's remarks and decided it was time to teach the professor a lesson for a change. Thankfully, he had the skills to do just that.

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Item: Dried root of Wolfsbane plant

Type: Potion ingredient

> Extremely poisonous when consumed raw

> Can improve [Poison Resistance] is prepared and consumed in a specific way.

Rarity: Uncommon

Description:

A piece of dried root from the wolfsbane plant also known as Aconite. Can be used as an ingredient to make a number of potions most common of which are known as Wolfsbane potion and Poison resistance enhancer. Should be handled with caution.

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"It's a piece of dried aconite root." Ashton confidently replied before throwing it back at Kakaroff who caught it as well, "Am I correct professor?"

The nobles couldn't help but giggle. They were sure he had gotten it wrong and would get punished. However, once they noticed the expression on Kakaroff's face, they stopped immediately.

It was like they had never seen anyone get angry before. Those who were standing in the front could have sworn smoke was coming out of his nostrils and ears. But it stopped in a blink of an eye and his expression turned back to normal.

"The brat is correct. It is the root of dried aconite. Well done, what's your name kid?"

"Ashton Fen- I mean, Ashton Bismark, sir."

"You seem to be an interesting fella. You can identify the ingredients, so let's see how well can you brew the potion." All of a sudden Kakaroff was being a bit nicer to him, but a moment later he was back into barking mode.

"The same goes for all of you. The one who will brew the best wolfsbane potion would get a reward from me.. The hell are you, idiots, waiting for? The recipe has already been fed into your watches. Follow it and start brewing the potion!"

Chapter 83 - Novice Brewer (1)

Meanwhile, somewhere within the third year dorms, Carlile and his friends (more like lackeys) were busy discussing their failure of a plan. Hugo was supposed to injure Ashton gravely.

So much so that he would need to be transported out of Contingent under the guise of a 'duel'. Where others would give Ashton relief from ever seeing the world again.

Carlile had called in a bunch of favours with Amaira to make it happen. She was supposed to ignore whatever happened inside the arena and since she was a purist as well, she agreed. However, their plan backfired badly when it was Hugo who had to be hospitalised after the duel.

"I told you trusting the first year on his first day was too much." The blonde-haired guy chimed in, "If we want it to get done, we should have done it ourselves."

"Yeah? And how does the great magus Nick recommends we go about it? There a reason why the seniors are not allowed around the junior wing, remember?" The frail-looking guy mocked the blonde guy who was referred to as Nick.

"Unlike a certain someone, I already proposed a plan!" Nick yelled back, "How the fck is it my fault if that bastard did not appear on the grounds like the other first years? We could have roughed him up a bit like we did those other kids. Micheal, you should have used your useless belly and forced him to come out!"

"Yeah, that would have been easy right? Unlike you morons, I'm not an S ranker. I have to be careful with what I do. This skinny bastard could have done so himself, couldn't you Sheamus?" The red-headed fatso yelled back at all of them.

While the three of them argued back and forth about what they could and could not have done, Carlile stayed silent. He was pretty confident in Hugo's skill. After all, despite being a first-year, he had a rare ability on him.

[Pounce] skill was more than just a simple jumping skill. Once activated, it would momentarily boost the user's agility by 1.5 times. This would have increased Hugo's agility to about 30 points, which would have been more than enough for him to strike Ashton first.

As long as he landed his first strike he would have won against Ashton without failing and Carlile would be free from the burden his brother had forced him to take on.

"Shut up." Carlile finally spoke up, "Let the bastard enjoy his life till he can. I'll get rid of him soon enough."

"How?" The lackeys asked him simultaneously.

"Accidents are common in dungeons and can happen to anyone." Carlile replied before stretching his neck, "Even in the lower rank dungeons. Just tell Amaira to make sure that mutt gets a place in the subjugation party. I'll handle the rest."

Saying so, Carlile left to attend his next class. Leaving his lackeys behind.

"Man, he sure is a crazy bastard." Nick shrugged his shoulders, "Should we also reserve a place in the graveyard for the mutt?"

"Nah, let the professors handle that as usual. But let's go and inform Amaira about his plan." Micheal said with a stupid grin.

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At the same time, back in the potion's class...

"You call this a potion? Even amputated bastards can stir the pot better than you can." Kakaroff scolded yet another student, "What about you? The heck did you do to make a noise so loud? You had to add the root AFTER crushing it! It's a miracle this class is still in one piece because you idiots are no less than those human terrorists wanting to blow up the academy!"

The same thing had been going on for a long time. Actually, ever since they started preparing the Wolfsbane potion. Everyone was doing something wrong, even though they were strictly following the recipe as it was mentioned.

Ashton's luck was not any better either. Identifying ingredients and making a potion out of them were two entirely different things. On top of that, Kakaroff's constant gaze was not helping him either.

Even though so far Kakaroff had not scolded him, much to his surprise and the dismay of the rest, Ashton had a feeling if he could not make the potion perfectly, the mad professor was going to do a lot more than just scold him.

'Common there has to be something I can do right?'

[Potion Brewing proficiency: 89.69%]

[Continue brewing potions to increase your proficiency.]

'Yeah, yeah. What else do you think I am doing?'

Just like suffering pain gave him [Pain Resisitnce], and obtaining new information increased his intelligence. It seemed brewing potions also increased his proficiency in brewing potions. This was his only ray of hope, although there was a slight problem there as well.

The proficiency was taking a hell lot of time to go up by even a single per cent. On top of that, repeating the same process did not award him much increase in proficiency, if at all. For example, at first, when he was stirring the pot, for every circle he completed his proficiency increased by 1%.

But now, even after stirring the pot for like a minute straight, he only got a 0.01% increase.

"Half an hour remaining you dimwits! Pick up the pace! Does none of you wants the reward?" Kakaroff insinuated in a weird way, "Let's make this interesting. If you can't finish brewing the potion by the end of the class, you will be given some sort of punishment. So what's it gonna be suckers? A reward or a punishment?"

Upon hearing the word punishment, everyone panicked. While all of them wonder what kind of punishment the mad professor would give them, none of them wanted to be the ones to suffer just to know that.

'Judging by his personality, he would probably make us drink a shitload of potions created by him and treat us like lab rats.' Ashton shook his head and focused more on brewing the potion, 'Why the heck it isn't turning blue like it was supposed? What am I doing wrong?'

## Chapter 84 - Novice Brewer (2)

Ashton could see most of the class make weird expressions upon hearing what Kakaroff had to say. The threat of punishment was making them work even harder. But simple hard work was not going to make any difference in potion-making. Suddenly Anna's hand shot up in the air. She had finished making her potion.

"Finally someone did something." Kakaroff sighed and rushed over to her table, "Step aside! How am I supposed to take a look if you keep hovering over me?"

He then proceeded to drop an azure gemstone inside Anna's pot. There was a string attached to the stone using which Kakaroff pulled the stone back. The gemstone had only been inside Anna's pot for a second and yet its colour had changed from blue to green and parts of it appeared to have decayed.

"It's too toxic. It would appear you being the brat you are, forgot to purify the Aconite root before putting it in the potion." Kakaroff shook his head, "If someone had drunk this potion, it would've killed them in mere seconds. Stop being so careless. Start over again or find a way to purify this potion!"

As soon as Ashton heard the professor say that, he just like the rest of them realised the mistake all of them had made. In the rush of brewing the potion before everyone else, all of them had screwed up.

'Damn it! There's not a single step included in the recipe telling us to purify the damn thing!'

Ashton re-read the recipe twice and sure enough, there wasn't a single mention of purifying the Aconite before using it. Instead, it was mentioned in the list of ingredients that they had to use purified Aconite in the first place.

'Fuck! We all got played by the professor!'

All of them had assumed the Aconite was purified since it was provided by the professor and there was not a single mention of how they could have purified the aconite themselves. But that wasn't the case. Even Ashton's [Detection skill] had been fooled.



It was no wonder that neither of their potions was looking as they were supposed to. Upon completion, the potion was supposed to have a blue hue. Something that Ashton was complaining about. But all of their potions had turned green, which symbolised that the potion was highly toxic.

'There has to be a way to purify aconite after being added to the potion...'

While the others had given up getting the reward and continued brewing their toxic potion, Ashton gave up on stirring his potion and started looking for ways he could have taken the toxicity of the potion away or at least reduce it somehow. However, he was short on time, just like the others were.

'Come on, come on... there has to be something that could help.'

Ashton was madly flipping through the pages of the potion course e-book that was fed into their watches. But to no avail. There were way too many potion recipes that could have the answer he was looking for. But the constraint of time did not allow him to take a deep dive into the potions and look for answers.

"Twenty minutes remaining." Kakaroff reminded them while his eyes were fixated on Ashton, 'Looks like the kid has figured out what he has to do. He just needs to find a suitable ingredient. If he can find out what it is within five minutes, he should be able to make the concoction. If not... well then too bad. All of them would have to suffer.'

'Shit... what would I do even if I found an ingredient and it wasn't in the room itself? Fck this book.'

Ashton hastily closed the book as a realisation dawned upon him. He could not waste time trying to look for an ingredient mentioned in the book only to realise it wasn't even available to them.

As a result, he decided to use [Detection] to search through entire cupboards filled with ingredients. In hopes of finding something useful.

The rest of the students were a bit weirded out upon seeing him running all over the room. But little did they know they should have started running after him as well. Time was running out and there were too many ingredients to search.

However, luck was on Ashton's side as in his fifth attempt he finally found what he had been looking for.

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Item: Seed of Fiery Sunflower

Type: Potion ingredient/ Medicinal herb

> Can be easily confused with Licorice seed based on appearance.

> Can be used to absorb most poisons including the poison from Aconite.

Rarity: Uncommon

Description:

A small pebble-like mass that is usually found at the centre of the mutated sunflower also known as Fiery Sunflower. Can be used raw to cleanse a body or a liquid by absorbing the poison within them.

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"Yes!" Ashton quickly grabbed two of them and rushed over to his station. But not before secretly slipping one of them into Anna's potion.

"Present the potion to the professor for a re-evaluation once the greenish colour disappears. It should take about fifteen minutes for that. Also, consider this thanks for helping me out after the first round of exams."

"Thanks..." Anna mumbled absentmindedly watching Ashton retreat.

Ashton quickly dropped the seed inside his own concoction and began stirring it rapidly. As he had expected, the greenish colour of the potion soon began disappearing and within minutes, it turned blue.

Ashton did not even need to call Kakaroff to check the potion. The dwarf rushed over to check it himself. He did the same thing again and to everyone's surprise this time the colour of the gemstone remained unchanged.

"Wonderful... ahem, I meant it's passable. The potion can be consumed without having any side effects. Though it barely made the cut." That's all Kakaroff said before heading back to his seat.

[Potion Brewing proficiency: 100%]

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You have earned a new title: [Novice Brewer]

Potions brewed by you now have a 5% chance to impart additional effects.

Continue brewing more potions to upgrade this title and its related effects.

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"That was fun...." Ashton mumbled before wiping the sweat off of his forehead.

## Chapter 86 - A Token Of Appreciation (2)

"You never told me anything about this!?" Jason was a bit worried now.

Although Jason was much bigger and more buffer than Ashton was, he still couldn't help but break a sweat upon seeing Ashton's jet black claws. It almost felt as if electricity was running through him, straightening his short and curly black hairs. he had never had goosebumps like he was now.

He didn't know it, but it was the intuition of his body screaming at him to make a break for it. There was something off about this kid and he no longer wanted to get in the middle of the mess of his juniors. But it was a little too late to back down now.

When Nick and Nicole approached him for help, he thought he would simply have to roughen up a rowdy first year. Not someone who was better in shapeshifting than he was. Well, not only better than him but most of the second years.

"The hell did we know he could completely transform his limbs!?"

Jason wasn't the only one panicking. The Gruntas were the same. At that moment, they realised one thing, Ashton was not someone they could have messed with without proper preparation. And with proper preparation, they meant, with weapons to kill him.

Also, they could finally figure out why he was able to kill Lucas and the others. He was already stronger than most of them, coupled with the fact that he could transform his limbs whenever he wanted, made him a foe no first years could have taken care of on their own.

'Just who is this mutt? How the fck is he so strong?' Nick gritted his teeth so much all of them could hear the noise coming out of his mouth.

"Hey... are you fckers gonna keep chatting amongst yourselves or fight?" Ashton asked them while flexing his ominous claws.

Jason looked a bit worried for his safety even though they had not started the fight yet. Seeing the emotions of fear and confusion in the eyes of his opponent made Ashton chuckle.

He finally realised why the hell the mistress was so adamant about him learning at least a bit of transformation, during his training in Maddencreek. Even if his claws weren't as strong as his opponent, just manifesting them could cause quite a mental effect on his opponents. But only against those who thought they were stronger than him.

Just like it was happening with Jason and the twins. Intimidation tactics didn't always help while fighting against multiple opponents. But when they did, it was bliss and opened numerous paths one could take.

Either Ashton could have used this time to run away and live to fight another day, or he could have decided to end it all right then and there. No matter which path he chose, the shock factor would help him immensely.

'Who the hell wants to run away?' Ashton made up his mind and launched himself in Jason's direction.

A moment later, his full-powered punch landed on Jason's chin. It was one of the biggest weak points werewolves had and if an attack landed there with sufficient strength, it would knock most of them down.

How did Ashton know it so well? Because he had been the Mistress's personal punching bag during his 'training'. It was safe to say, there would have been next to no one who could have experienced getting knocked out as much as he did.

Ashton had tried to do the same with Hugo too when he kicked his jaw. But his placement was a bit off. As a result, rather than getting knocked out, Hugo ended up suffering from a dislocated jaw. However, this case was not the same as before.

Earlier, Hugo's undivided attention was on his target. Thus he was able to move a bit to protect himself on a whim or instinct.

But now, Jason and the twins were in a state of shock. Thus their mind was confused. As a result, they could not have anticipated Ashton's strike beforehand. As a result, Ashton's blow landed right on Jason's chin sending him flying into the wall behind him... right past Nick.

"Jason, you okay?"

Nicole immediately went to check on Jason. Only to realise he was out cold. Ashton's surprise attack coupled with the enhanced strength from his transformed hand, was more than sufficient to deal a decisive blow.

'Step two.'

Knocking someone in one blow was not an easy thing to do. As the punch or the kick had to land on an exact place. However, if one was successful in doing so, it would give them a couple of seconds to make their next move.

Why? Because it would take some time for the others to realise what just happened. It was during this time Ashton had to make his next move.

He immediately turned all his attention towards Nick and dashed with all his might. It was time to make the Gruntas realise why he was the S ranker and not them.

Ashton reeled back his hand to deliver another punch. However, mere milliseconds before his fist would have landed on his target, Ashton found his face planted onto the ground and his hands forced behind his back. He had no idea what was going on, but someone had just pinned him down on the ground.

'Were there more of them?' Ashton thought but a moment later he realised that wasn't the case.

Both of the twins were facing the same treatment as he was, and had their faces firmly planted on the ground.

"All of the culprits have been subdued. It appears to be some sort of scuff between first years." Ashton heard a masculine voice. It was the voice of the one who had him pinned down, "It appears a second year was involved in the matter as well. But he got knocked out by an S ranker."



His voice was followed by some sort of electronic voice. Although, Ashton could not hear what it said despite having his [Perception] skill stretched to the limit.

"No. The S ranker isn't a second year. He's from the first year. I know it sounds ridiculous but it's true." The man replied, "What do you want us to do? Let the S ranker go with a warning as usual?"

The same electronic sound could be heard again in the background.

"Fine.. We'll bring all of them into the Disclipnary committee's chamber."

Chapter 87 - A Token Of Appreciation (3)

"Come on, on your feet." The person holding Ashton said and pulled him up with just one hand, "You two as well. Get up and start walking."

As all of them were forced on their feet, Ashton got his first look at the person who was holding him down. Well, not his face but the uniform he was wearing. It was completely black with golden accessories laced around it.

'The DC... well, I'll be damned.' Ashton shook his head.

The DC or the disciplinary committee/council was a student body that was bestowed authoritative powers to maintain discipline on academy grounds. They were even allowed to hold trials and punish the offenders by themselves but it was never actually implemented. At least not that the students were aware of.

Other than that, there wasn't much Ashton knew about them, just like he didn't know how the hell they were able to get there in the nick of time. On top of that, he was surprised that his [Perception] was not able to sense them at all. Well, at least not until his attacker had already planted his head to the ground.

As for the one who had him pinned down, he was not an ordinary guy whom Ashton could have defeated even with all his genes active. Why? Well, because the man was already on level 25, which made him the highest levelled student Ashton had seen in the academy.

Other than that most of the guy's information was hidden. Even the detection skill was not able to get much about him. The enigma coupled with the person's uncaring attitude made Ashton break a sweat.

He didn't know why, but his insides were screaming at him to not annoy the man in any way. It was somewhat similar to how he felt when the Mistress revealed her true strength to him. But on a much lower scale.

Standing at 5'11" feet tall, the man had elbow-length burgundy coloured hair that he wore as a high ponytail. His entire body mass was comparable to a Roman gladiator. He wasn't wearing the complete uniform and had the sleeves of his blazer missing.

Thanks to the missing sleeves, Ashton could see that the guy's arm was covered in innumerable scars. Some of them were made from claws while most of them appeared to have been left behind by a sharp object like a knife or sword.

Although his arms were covered in scars, the biggest scar of them all was on his face. It looked like a scar left after getting burned. It started from the right temple and stretched all the way down to his neck. Ashton wasn't sure whether the scar ended there or not as the rest of it got covered by the person's uniform.

"What are you waiting for? Get moving." The man gently pushed him ahead.

However, for some reason, the Gruntas were not receiving as gentle of treatment as he was. Ashton wasn't sure whether the other DC members weren't aware of their identity or they simply didn't care enough about it.

'It could be because I'm an S ranker and they are not.' Ashton thought.

His hands were zip-tied behind his back. It wasn't like that could have stopped him from freeing himself. Ashton was confident he could break his constraints. But since he didn't want more trouble and they weren't as uncomfortable as he had expected, he decided to leave them on. For now.

Since the DC chamber was located within the administrative building, which happened to be next to the Hostel, the trip was as short as one could have expected. But the short distance didn't make it any less humiliating.

Well, not for Ashton but for the Gruntas who felt as if they were thieves who had been caught stealing and were now being paraded through the city. Ashton, on the other hand, was enjoying their misery.

Since they were the ones to attack him, he felt like them getting humiliated was a consolation prize for him. As he was not able to get a hit on either one of them. There was another reason why he wasn't as distraught as the Gruntas.

He was an S ranked student. Which meant his punishment, if he would be even given one, for causing trouble on campus wouldn't be half as harsh as the punishment the Gruntas would have to face. Also, since they were the ones to instigate the fight, he would not have to take any blame either.

"Wait here."

The man sat him down on a comfortable chair right outside the DC chamber while the Grunta's were made to sit on the opposite end. The council members then left them there.

"This is so humiliating..." Nick mumbled as soon as the council members were out of earshot.

"Is it? I'm having a lot of fun, to be honest." Ashton said with a wide smirk on his face.

Nick did not say a word but made sure to express himself by flipping Ashton off.

"Wow, your fingers are really as small as your ego." Ashton scoffed.

Much to Nick's dismay, his face turned red with anger. But as soon as Nicole touched his arm, all of his rage disappeared. It almost felt as if she had used some kind of magic to calm his nerves. And she had done it right on time as well, as a moment later the man who had been subdued Ashton reappeared in front of them.

"All of you, get inside. The Council President will now decide your punishments."

Ashton was the first one to go inside. He had expected a bunch of third years present there... but boy was he wrong. Some seniors were present there, but so were a couple of professors. One of which was Amaira.

As for the second professor, Ashton had not had the opportunity to him yet. However, judging by the looks he was giving him, he did not seem to be happy upon seeing him for some reason Ashton did not know about.

'Why am I having a feeling that I've been set up?'

Chapter 88 - A Token Of Appreciation (4)

"Oh, it's him again." Amaira sniggered the moment she saw Ashton walk in along with the Gruntas, "You will never cease causing problems, will you?"

"It seems you already know who the troublemaker is, Professor Amaira." The professor sitting next to Amaira chimed in, "How convenient it is. Lady Michelle, I will suggest you save all of us some time and immediately punish the kid according to your disciplinary council laws."

Ashton might think that it was all a set-up, but actually, this was happening because of his rotten luck and nothing else. It was a rule that if the Disciplinary council ever decides to hold a trial, two professors should be present throughout the duration of the trial to ensure it was an unbiased one.

As a result, while Ashton and the Gruntas were being brought in for their 'trial', the council president asked for the available professors to come and oversee the trial. None of the professors initially wanted

to get involved with something so irrelevant and had been wanting to let the S ranker involved in the incident go, as usual.

But all that changed as soon as they realised who the S ranker in question was. Lady luck must be shining quite brightly over Amaira's head. As she had been given the perfect opportunity to get some sort of revenge on Ashton for all the troubles he had caused her for beating up Hugo.

As for the blue-haired professor next to Ashton, he didn't know who Ashton was. He wanted to be unbiased and get the trial over with as soon as possible. But when his brown eyes fell on Ashton's slave mark, which was now out in the open as the sleeve of his shirt got torn apart during his transformation, his stance changed completely.

Even if he was an S ranker, this unknown professor wasn't someone who would have ever taken the side of a mutt over a noble family. Especially, if the noble family in question was the Gruntas.

"With all due respect, Professor Tanaka, this council does not show preference to anyone based on their birth." A blonde girl sitting in the middle of the professors spoke up, "We are here to see what happened and who was at fault, rather than passing judgement just because you want us to."

The girl continued, "Also, I would like to remind you that your attendance is just a formality and you hold no powers here. So please, be patient and refrain from showing your blatant favouritism."

Although the girl had said all that with the politest smile on her face, it was clear her words had stung the professors quite a bit.

'Her family must be somewhat strong for her to scold the professors like that.'

Ashton was completely surprised by the girl. But he was, in for an even bigger surprise when the Gruntas immediately went on their knees as soon as they saw her.

"May the great Lycaon bless her majesty with eternal beauty and might." Both of them yelled simultaneously.

'Her majesty...? I guess her stats make some sense now. She's level 29 already... damn.' All of a sudden, Ashton was out in an awkward position, 'Still, why do I feel like I'm fcked?'

If she was a princess, it was obvious none of the professors said anything to her once she had made her stance clear. They might have been professors of the academy in a neutral city, but even then they could not afford to upset someone of royal lineage.

But it also placed Ashton in trouble. Although it didn't mention that the princess was a purist, Ashton was pretty sure that she, being the princess, would not support him. At least not against high-classed nobles like the Gruntas.

"I wish we could have met under different circumstances." The princess replied with elegance dripping from her voice, "But it seems you have been causing some problems, Nick and Nicole Grunta. Your parents would be ashamed of your un-noble like behaviour."

Nick opened his mouth to say something, but he was immediately silenced by one of the other attendees. This was a trial, not a ballroom dance where he could speak as and when he pleased. They were only to speak, when they were asked to, otherwise they had to keep their mouth shut.

"Leon, would you mind telling us what happened earlier?" The princess said with her usual smile.

At that moment, the one who had subdued Ashton stepped up and retold the story as he saw from his perspective. Ashton was pretty sure that the guy would change the narrative to help the Gruntas look like the victims there. But to Ashton's surprise and Grunta's dismay, Leon did not alter anything.

"Are you sure that's what happened? I personally know all three of them and I refuse to believe that the Gruntas did something like that unprovoked!" Amaira interrupted as soon as Leon was finished retelling the story.

"Professor, I assure you, I have only reported what I saw myself." Leon had a look of annoyance on his face.

The presence of the professors was the reason he did not want to be a part of the trial in the first place. But since he had been the first one to act, he had to be the one to deliver the report about the incident as well.

"Then I guess there's nothing much for us to debate about." The princess mumbled as she got up from her seat, "Nick and Nicole Grunta you have been found guilty of planning and assaulting an innocent party. As punishment, both of you will be placed under house arrest for a month and will only be allowed to attend classes. As for you,"

She turned towards Ashton, "For ruthlessly assaulting a senior, you are hereby suspended from attending any physical training classes for a month. If you have any problems regarding your punishments, you can appeal your case in front of Madam Director. You are free to leave now."



"We will gladly accept the punishment as it is." The Gruntas said with a gleeful smile. They weren't the only ones smiling like the bastards they were either. Both of the professors were too.

It might seem like their punishment was severe. But in reality, it was Ashton whose punishment was worse than he Gruntas. A month without physical training would place him way behind everyone else in his class.

Not only that, once he was pushed behind, it was entirely possible that he would end up losing his S rank privileges.

'This bitch... acting all righteous in front of everyone and screwing me from behind.' Ashton gritted his teeth in anger, 'Now I realise why the mistress fcking hates them so much. These bastards are rotten to their core.'

The princess might have been all high and powerful now. But she was going to regret doing this to him in future. Ashton was going to make sure of it. But for now, he had to put on his best performance and thank that princess bitch for her shitty ruling.

"Thank you for your kind judgement, your highness.." Ashton said with a subtle but forced smile on his face, "I'll surely give you a token of my appreciation in the future."

## Chapter 89 - Laying Low

A week had passed since the 'just' princess had screwed Ashton over. True to her word, Ashton was not allowed to attend any classes that even remotely required him to do physical labour. As pissed as he was because of that, he made sure to not waste his time idling.

Either way, the physical training only happened for two hours a day, six times a week. Which was next to nothing, when compared to the training regime he had going on for himself. The princess could have only stopped him from training in classes, but no matter how influential she was in the academy, even she could not stop him from training altogether.

Although he had been and still was against the idea of having slaves around him, he couldn't help but realise their worth. Especially, dark-haired Duncan, the human male. Ashton realised he was quite the spearman. On top of that, he knew how to use his scrawny figure to his advantage.

At first, when Ashton proposed the idea of the slave helping him train, he had thought the slave would just poke him around with a spear. That way, Ashton would be able to gain some meagre amount of exp. Still, it would have been better than getting nothing at all.

However, Duncan was a bit hesitant and rightfully so. Both of the slaves had been given clear instructions by the mistress not to cause any harm to Ashton. Thus duelling against him was a straight no.

It was only after a quick chat with the mistress that Duncan was willing to fight Ashton. if Ashton wanted to, he could have defeated Duncan with one move. But the more he fought the human, the more he started to appreciate Duncan's spearmanship.

It was clear as the cloudless sky above them, that Duncan wasn't a nobody as Ashton had expected. He was a trained fighter who could have given others in Ashton's class a run for their money. Well, only till they did not use their abilities.

Duncan might have been good with a spear, but at the end of the day, he was just a human. He did not have a chance against the werewolves if they used their full strength against him.

Still, his battle style was something that Ashton quickly picked up. So far, he had been relying on his strength to get rid of tougher enemies, who most of the time were bigger than he was. But now that he had learned something new, thanks to Duncan, he could use it to overwhelm even stronger enemies. Just like Duncan was overwhelming him.

However, at the end of the day, it wasn't enough. Ashton needed to come up with a better plan to level up, not just the werewolf genes but all of the genes within him. While he thought of a way to do that, the mistress needed some answers from him. Well, technically she only needed an answer to one question.

What did he do to get punished in the first place?

Ashton then begrudgingly explained everything to her. At first, it didn't look like she believed him in the least. That was until he told her who was the one to punish him.

"That bitch!" These were the first words that escaped through her mouth.

"I thought you would know her. Guess I was right."

"Of course, I know my youngest 'half-sister'. I just can't fathom why is she still in the academy. She should have graduated last year!"

"I assume this sister is different than the one you almost killed?"

Ashton was a bit confused as to how many daughters did the king had!? Didn't he have anything better to do, rather than making babies? He was a king but to Ashton, he just came off as a horndog who couldn't keep his thing in his pants.

"I used the term 'youngest', didn't I?" The mistress sighed, "She should have graduated last year. That's why I selected you to enter the academy this year. Now I have something I need to figure out. Till then, keep your head down and don't even think about doing anything to her."

"As you wish..."

With that their conversation was cut short. He didn't know what was such a big deal about the princess still attending the academy. Students failed there all the time, she could have been one of those who unfortunately failed. Simple.

"Nah, it ain't that simple. There's no way a failed student would be selected to become the DC president. Guess I'll ask the director about it while appealing my case today."

Ashton had discussed the possibility of revoking his punishment through the director with Rose. She spoke her mind on the matter and told Ashton to let go of it. But if he wanted he was free to appeal his case.

So that's what he did and today he was supposed to meet the director to see what they can do about his punishment. He had been expecting the director to be on his side like she always was. But this time, things weren't as simple as Ashton believed.

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An hour later inside the Director's office.

"I don't think I'll be lifting your punishment yet, Mr Bismark." The director replied after hearing his case.

"But madam director-"

"Zip it."

As she uttered those words, Ashton lost his voice. He was trying his best to speak up, but not a single sound came out of his mouth.

"Now, listen carefully to what I have to say." She continued after putting Ashton under her silence spell, "I'm not revoking the punishment for your own good. We both know you have are being targeted by the nobles because you were formerly a human. A species they loathe."

"Also, the fact that you're registered as 'Bismark' in the academy doesn't make matters any better. At least with the punishment being given to you, the nobles should not trouble you for a month. I would advise that you use this opportunity to get stronger through any means necessary. Is that understood?"

Ashton nodded. The director was correct. If she lifted his punishment, then it would only make the nobles think of something even sinister to get rid of him. Thus, it was better for Ashton to lay low and in the meantime and gain strength for what would happen next.. Thankfully, he knew of a way to do that, but he would need Rose's help for that.

## Chapter 90 - You're Mistaken

The talk with the director had opened up Ashton's eyes. But still, there was too much on his plate. The nobles were already his enemies and now that the princess had got a whiff of who he was, she wasn't going to stop pestering him either.

The director was pretty sure of that. That was the reason why she advised Ashton to try and grow stronger. Although she could have protected him from them as a service to his parents, who god knows were even alive or not, it was impractical to think she could have her eyes on Ashton 24x7.

That left them with only one option. He had to be responsible for protecting himself. Although not always, it wouldn't hurt them if he was prepared just in case. There was another thing she wanted to talk about... the hierarchy between the students of the academy.

While it was true the ranks of the students matter the most, there was another invisible hierarchy within the academy. A hierarchy based on the student's lineage and unfortunately, Ashton was at the bottom rung of that ladder.

Also, it was thanks to him being an S ranker, the professors, at least those who believed in the purity of blood and lineage, had already started judging the students based on their background rather than the skills they had.

Sadly, even though the Director was aware of this, there was nothing much she could have done. It would have been a different tale if one or two professors were doing it. She could have fired them and gotten it over with. After all, no tolerance was her way to get things done.

But she would not be able to fire multiple professors just because they did what the werewolves had been doing for the better part of the century... despising humans. What she could, however, do was to make Ashton understand about it.

She was a mutt too and had to work hard to get where she was now. She was not going to disclose how she managed to do what she did. But she could guide Ashton to carve such a path on his own.

"I know what you want to do, Ashton." She said as things began to settle down, "The change you want to bring isn't something anyone on the continent would even entertain thinking about. Humans are looked down upon for ages and the nobles triumph over everyone and everything here."

She continued, "Your blatant disregard of nobility and challenging them at every step might fly inside the academy, but it won't be forgotten or forgiven outside Contingent."

"What happened between you and Hugo might have been played off as a friendly spar that got out of hand. But your repetitive strikes on the nobles will only cause you more trouble ahead. Do you get what I am trying to say?"

"With all due respect, ma'am, I think I do have a right to defend myself if someone threatens me." Ashton took a deep breath to calm his nerves down, "You don't honestly expect me to not do something if I'm the one who gets attacked. Do you?"

The director shook her head and got up from her seat. Ashton was turning out to be just as stubborn as his parents were. Also, judging by the way he was going on about everything, the director had no doubt that someday he would end up just like his parents. Used and tossed aside by others.

But she could not say it out loud. After all, she too had played a part in what happened to them. But it was better for both her and Ashton if she did not disclose that information yet. She would be content if Ashton decided to hate her with all his being afterwards, but right now she had to protect him. For the sake of his parents and to atone for betraying them.

"It seems I have a habit of forgetting you are still a teenager," She turned her back towards him, "but I know you are more mature than others of your age because of the hardships you have suffered. So please try to understand what I am saying with the perspective of an adult and not a kid."

"Who told you I am mature? I'm probably the pettiest person to have ever walked into the academy." Ashton shrugged his shoulders, "But you are right. Everything I have suffered as a human did teach me something. An instinct for survival and to give back what I get from others tenfold."

At that moment, the director saw something in his eyes. Something she had been ignoring till now, thinking he was a youngster, but couldn't anymore. It was a thirst for revenge. Not just against the people who wronged his parents but also against the ones who had wronged him.

As justified of a reaction as it was, she was still the director of the academy and not his confidant. She was required to protect other students as much as she was to protect him. He was already responsible for killing three students, even if it was by accident and she could not let Ashton get out of hand any more.



"You should be careful what you do now, Ashton. You just might end losing more than you already have." Since advising him was not working she decided to take a different route, even though she did not want to.

"I think you've mistaken one thing, ma'am. Unlike you, I don't have anything to lose. I don't care what those nobles think about me or do to me. I only care about what I'll end up doing to them."

Saying so, Ashton got up to leave. It was clear to him that this conversation with the director was not going anywhere. Also, he had already received what he was there for in the first place.

"You do have something to lose Ashton. You will lose my support if you don't listen to me." She threw the last weapon in her arsenal to make Ashton stop from going down the path of self-destruction.

"Well, the joke's on you then. I did not enter the academy hoping you would support me. It has been wonderful talking to you, but I have a class to attend."