

Child in Black and White

ACT I: The Nameless Thing

She faltered in her steps, usually so swift and precise, she cursed her belly and the blasphemous life dwelling within. She would have ripped that parasite out of her body if only she had the strength to heal herself and not bleed out.

Unfortunately, she was too exhausted even to keep running, let alone attempting such an invasive procedure by herself without dying.

She gritted her teeth in frustration at her impotence, she had never felt so weak in her entire life... so powerless... which seemed to be a trend as of late.

No! She should not think about that now!

She glanced back to make sure none of those long eared bastards was still behind her. Her rescuer team put their lives on the line to make sure none of them could come after her. They were so close to the border! Almost back home! Back to her life where she was was-

Her train of thought was interrupted when she felt her head impact with something hard, though she was pretty sure no trees had been in front of her ever since she left the forest.

She stumbled back, almost falling due to her balance no longer being what she was used to due to her enlarged belly.

Her hands immediately went for her weapon out of habit, her eyes fixed on the dark figure standing in her way. She had never been a particularly tall woman, but she never felt so insignificantly small

before. This was not the first time an enemy of hers towered over her, plenty of demi-humans did the same, but none of them could compare to the sheer dominance this one was displaying. The instant chills that went down her spine were nothing like she ever felt before.

With two burning crimson flames in the place of eyes, devoid of any skin, and adorned in a gown of shadows. This was an undead the likes she never heard of before.

An undead on the border between the Elf Kingdom and the Slane Theocracy, what did she even stumble upon?

“Umu, have you been teleported here too? I guess those shitty devs didn’t even have the curtesy to create equally levelled parties... or maybe it was gear based? They might have thought that would have been more balanced seeing how any idiot could get to level 100 with some effort.”

The being spoke seemingly random words that she could hardly make sense of in her current state, or maybe even in a more calm one. But one thing was for sure, she was human and he was undead.

“Begone foul undead! Back off and I will spare your miserable existence!”

She could not afford wasting time with a battle right now, the Gods only knew how long the Scriptures could hold the elves off.

“You are one of those, eh? Listen, shutdown already happened, it makes no sense to keep up your roleplay or something... wait, are you pregnant? How did you manage to make the avatar look like that? And why?”

She had no further interest in listening to whatever nonsense drabble the undead was spewing.

“[Flow Accelerator] [Greater Ability Boost] [Greater Slash Strike]!”

She swung her scythe, the relic of the Gods that could even kill the unkillable at a speed no one who wasn't a God-Kin could even perceive.

“[Greater Hardening]”

With those words the undead proceeded to intercept her slash with his bare skeletal hand, blocking her in her tracks, something that was supposedly impossible.

The previous sensation of dread became an open abyss in her stomach, making her feel like she was falling into the endless void.

“[Energy Drain]”

She felt her already weakened and depleted body get sucked dry of any remaining stamina she had. Her vision started to blur as she felt her hands no longer capable of maintaining the grip over her weapon.

“Wait, you are not-“

That was all she could hear before her vision blackened and she abandoned the waking world.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

To say Suzuki Satoru was lost would be an understatement, both metaphorically and literally. He was just melancholically experiencing the shutdown and then he was in an open area under a breathtaking constellation of stars, he didn't think it was possible to make such a scenario with the realistic limitations of VR. He even felt a tinge of excitement at the thought of maybe being able to experience some sort of demo for a possible Yggdrasil 2.

That was when the world still made sense.

When the woman impacted his avatar, he thought that another player had just been randomly selected and teleported with him, maybe the shitty devs wanted to make them experience some sort of coop quest to introduce a new game? Her gear was quite good at first sight so that seemed promising, he then used [Discern Entity] to pry a little and discovered the player was just around level fifty before defensive magic kicked him out.

Then it turned out his initial assessment was mistaken, and that was no player at all, but just an NPC, and his previous curiosity apparently triggered her aggro. For some weird reason he could not understand the NPC looked heavily pregnant... the fact his aggression caused the possible quest to blow up briefly passed through his mind, but he was pretty sure such a blatant flaw would be noticed by all the AI that went over ready-to-be-released content.

Her sorry state prevented him from using any harmful spells, just limiting himself to blocking her attack and draining her HP, which he noticed was quite low and so stopped immediately. Though, the NPC seemed to faint... that should have not been possible by Yggdrasil logic.

And now he was here, in a summoned log cabin not far from where he first appeared. He carried the NPC with him, making sure to turn off his [Negative Touch] or risking harming her any further. He might not know what was going on, but leaving a pregnant woman, NPC or not, there in the middle of nowhere would have made Touch-Me log in only to beat him black and blue. And also, she seemed the only one he could actually interrogate for information.

While he waited for the NPC to wake up, he started experimenting a little, whatever this new... game? Was like. For once, he could smell things, which he was sure it was an illegal feature, but maybe he was just not adjourned with the newest laws, his sense of touch

was also greatly improved over the simplistic mechanics in Yggdrasil, and being undead stopped him from trying his taste sense.

He then tried to access his menu, which apparently was completely gone. He could have understood it if it was just a demo lasting at most a few minutes, but he had been here for the better part of an hour and this was completely illegal! Equivalent to kidnapping even! And no GMs answered any of his calls!

By the time the woman woke up he really didn't know what to think of his situation. All pointed toward something... very wrong and completely unlikely. Though, he needed to confirm something first.

The woman looked around herself with a confused gaze before her eyes snapped into focus on him. His undead features no hidden by a mask and gloves.

“Undead!”

She tried to move away, only managing to slip back against the bed's frame.

“Miss, I think you are confused, when I came across you, you seemed delirious... I would advice resting, even more in your condition, I would not be surprised if you were suffering from hallucinations, you had quite a high fever.”

The dark eyes of the woman never left him nor there seemed to be any kind of hesitation or doubt at this attempt at making it look like she was seeing things before.

“Where is my weapon, undead?”

She hissed out, sounding more like a very large and pissed cat, not buying any of his bullshit. ‘Oh well, it can't be helped’ not that he came up with a genius plan in the first place, he just hoped she

would be confused enough to doubt her own memories, which didn't seem to be the case.

With a heavy sigh he removed his useless mask and gloves.

“Can't blame a man for trying, your weapon is safe... it is quite the impressive item, I would have no qualms giving it back in exchange for information.”

He tried to prompt her for a bit of cooperation, dangling her weapon as leverage. He would decide afterward how to proceed.

“You are a blemish upon the Gods! Give it back! I will not fall for your paltry tricks! Do your worse!”

The woman seemed ready to throw down, weapon or not. He almost facepalmed, what even was this situation? A bedridden pregnant woman trying to fight him with her bare hands? Was this a poor joke.

The silence was interrupted by a growl from the woman who almost doubled over, as her hands went for her belly.

“Damn it! Fuck! Not now! You damned...”

He lost the rest of the cursing as his mind rebooted to understand what he was looking at before it shifted into place.

Was she... giving birth?

He could feel a large amount of panic overtake him before a sensation of calmness washed over him, snapping his mind back into focus.

Only to realize he had no idea what to do.

“[Summon low tier undead: Pumpkin Carnage] [Summon low tier undead: Reaper Nurse] [Summon low tier undead: Reaper Nurse]”

The three summons raised from the ground making him mentally sigh in relief at the spells still working. They were all trash summons, but Pumpkin was the only one capable of using healing magic without him having to bring out the big guns, the other two were summoned out of desperation, he hoped their name meant that they had some medical experience, as farfetched as that seemed.

“Help that woman deliver her child safely.”

He ordered as the three undead did not make a sound, simply turning around to ward the woman who was still doubling over in pain.

The two corpse nurses grabbed her and tried to push her back, only to be shoved off by the stronger human.

“STAY AWAY! You damned undead! Don’t touch ME!”

She was hysterical, her bloodshot eyes darting around like a cornered animal.

Satoru moved forward, he had no intention of letting the only source of information he had go to waste.

“Stay calm, we are only here to help you deliver that child, or do you prefer to risk your life doing it yourself?”

All he got in response was a spit aimed at him that missed the target. He was starting to get annoyed at this woman’s demeanor, but he still tried to keep his cool.

“You can either cooperate, or I will force you to stay still.”

He tried to sound more assertive, even raising his hand and making a magic circle appear to make his point clear.

Finally, the black-haired woman seemed to realize her position and comply, even if begrudgingly.

The two nurses again tried to approach her, and this time she did not offer resistance, other than a grimace, as they stripped her of her armor, leaving her in her underclothes.

She was pushed down on the bed by the nurses, using the pillows to position her accordingly, not that Satoru had any basis to judge.

He almost winced when any remaining doubts that this might be some kind of weird quest were stripped away when the two nurses removed the woman's pants and underwear leaving her privates exposed for all to see.

What followed from there was a couple hours of misery, both for the struggling woman and for Satoru who was not at all mentally ready to witness the process. He tried to avoid looking as much as possible to try and preserve some of the woman's modesty.

The wailing of a newborn broke the routine of grunts and curses. He honestly was just happy it was over, the Pumpkin Carnage has been invaluable in continuing to use his healing spells on the woman who would have probably had a far worse time without the added help.

One of the nurses approached him offering him something. Out of simple habits he just accepted it without thinking, only to realize a moment later that what she offered him was none other than the baby who was still wailing, their face was completely red and the head was sporting just a few strands of short hair, the nurses had at least cleaned the baby from any remaining bodily fluids.

The infant soon stopped their crying as their eyes opened and met Satoru's. He almost had a double take when he noticed the child's peculiarity as their left eye was white while her right was black, he internally hoped that it didn't mean the child was blind on one side.

Those eyes were almost enough to make the other oddity go unnoticed. Their ears were strangely pointed, very much like the elvish ones he knew, even if far shorter. Satoru glanced from the baby to her mother to make sure he did not mistake the woman's race, but there was no doubt, she was human.

Though, having shifted his attention to the woman made him notice how the undead had covered her modesty and placed her lying down on the bed after the surely exhausting ordeal.

He moved toward her bedside, crouching down and offering the baby to her, only to receive an horrified and disgusted glare from the woman. It took him a second too long to realize that the gaze was not meant for his undead visage, but rather the small bundle he was offering to her.

“Kill it... kill it... kill it... get that monster away!”

He recoiled at the woman's venomous words, the baby starting to cry again as she raised her voice.

His skeletal visage was not capable of conveying shock, but that didn't stop him from experiencing it nonetheless.

What kind of reaction was that?!

He remembered Touch-Me once talking about he feared his wife would not love their children, as some parents had problems adjusting at first and might come to resent the child unjustly. But to outright at them?! With such passion nonetheless?!

He looked down at the crying baby... what was he supposed to do now?

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Faine stared into nothingness, ever since she woke up, curtesy of the crying of that blasted parasite.

She hoped this hell would come to an end. She had been a captive for almost a year, she, the trump card of the Theocracy, reduced to a sex slave for the worthless spawn of those false gods. Even after she was confirmed with child, the hateful bastard did not stop violating her body.

After that endless cycle of torment, she was finally rescued by the Scriptures sent for her, she was so out of it she didn't even remember which ones they sent. And when she was about to get away and finally get some relief, she was captured again, this time by an undead of all things... an incredibly powerful one no less.

If nothing else, that should have been the end of her torment, but instead she was taken and even forced to give birth. She hoped that the monster would murder that parasite, or use it for some ritual, or whatever as long as it died. But no! She couldn't have even that much! The bony bastard limited himself to leave the child in a crib in the same room as her!

Truly, undead were the worst enemy of the living, capable of understanding what would torture them the most with a mere glance. After all, there was no other reason for him to do as he did if not for torturing her.

AND THAT BLASTED HALFBREED WAS STILL CRYING!

She barely slept a couple hours and her body had not recovered at all from its captivity and the strain of giving birth. Still, she was the best the Theocracy had to offer, and so she forced her legs to suffer the strain of standing up.

She moved forward, almost stumbling, much to her shame, on her way to the crib.

She knew what the misshaped thing wanted. Her traitorous body made it clear enough with how much her breast hurt, full as they are.

Faine grabbed the abomination in her arms, almost disgusted at the mere contact, she exposed her nipple and let the hateful thing take what it wanted from her. At last, there was silence, and even her breasts began to hurt less. A bit of relief in this hellish existence of hers, even at the cost of pleasing the very thing she despised most in this world, second only to the bastard who put it in her.

She looked down in disdain at the thing that, after taking what it wanted, proceeded to snuggle against her bosom as if mimicking an actual child. She placed it back in the crib, unwilling to indulge the thing anymore than she already had.

“Have you decided on a name?”

If someone said that she jumped in place at the unexpected deep voice, she would deny that fact till her last day. She didn’t even hear the blasted undead come in, his unholy presence only now making itself known to her.

“You do not name a thing that should have never existed to begin with.”

She rebutted with all the venom she could muster. If she didn’t know any better, it almost seemed the undead’s gaze darkened at her words, probably just a trick of her sleep deprived mind.

“We will move soon.”

Those words took Faine aback, implying the fact that she would still be expected to follow. She could not fathom why that would be, the damnable being had already taken everything from her, every last of the Gods’ artifacts bestowed upon her were gone. No doubt being added to whatever collection of items the undead already possessed.

If nothing else, him taking her along would grant a chance for her to recover them. She could not bear to think of returning to her homeland despoiled, broken, and basically naked. Not once, in the more than 400 years since the Theocracy's creation, had anyone suffered such an humiliation or ever lost one of the artifacts, let alone a full set. She might as well march toward eternal shame or execution.

"I thought this would be a nice place."

The undead continued as if he expected some sort of opinion from her as he took out the map she was first given by her rescuers to indicate their escape route. One of the things the undead apparently took off of her while she was indisposed.

The bony finger of the monster tapping over the wasteland that was the Katze Plains. Figures... only an undead could consider that like a nice place...

"I guess the likes of you would enjoy being surrounded by your own kind."

She tried to sound as dismissive and insulting as possible even though the undead gave no sign he cared at all for her input.

"Umu, so there are a lot of undead here... it should work then..."

She half heard what he was mumbling under his breath, not that she cared in the first place.

"I need some sleep now, I know that is an hard concept for a monster like you to understand, but if you wish to keep me alive that is the price."

The undead did not answer her mocking words, simply limiting himself to leaving the room.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

This was a wasteland.

That was Satoru's first assessment after he set up a base in these so called Katze Plains. From the map he observed and the name he expected more of a large grass plain that went on forever, instead all he found was a deserted land.

Well, he should have had his first doubts when he saw how the territory remain unclaimed even with four countries bordering it. Alarm bells should have rung when the black-haired woman spoke of it as a nest for undead.

Apparently, he had been a bit too excited to see what this new world had to offer. And wasn't that just weird to say? He was in a new world. This was real, the birthing he had witnessed was a very shocking but indisputable awakening to the fact.

That was the main reason why he had to bolt out of there as soon as possible. After he consulted the map he borrowed, he noticed how they were in between two bordering countries and if the woman was to take as an example of an ordinary being around those parts, well... they might have been under levelled, by a lot at that, but their gear was top notch, not far from his own, which was a worrying prospect.

That is why he took everything and moved right away to somewhere he would possibly not be noticed. There was no point in investigating a wasteland after all, and mimicking himself among the roaming undead here would have been easy. For all he had seen till now, they were also extremely weak and posed him no threat. The worst thing he witnessed was a couple elder liches and a death knight. If humanity did not deem this land worthy of the effort of eliminating such weak undead, he very much doubted he would be discovered soon as long as he lied low.

He would have preferred using [Create Fortress], but the tower would have been too visible in such a plain environment, so he limited himself to using [Create Kasbah], a minor structure made of sandy rock that would mimic well among the wasteland. Of course, he was no noob, and surrounded it with all his best anti-information and defensive spells.

That said, his major worry was no longer his location, but rather his company.

As expected, the undead he summoned vanished after the time was up, leaving him alone with that psycho woman and an infant. As Suzuki Satoru, when thinking of motherhood, he could not help but envision his own mother and her caring side, even though the sweet memories were accompanied by the bitterness of what it all brought to. But when he looked at that woman, he could not see any of that, only hatred and contempt for a child who deserved none seeing how she was brought into the world against their will.

Speaking of which, he should check up on them. Maybe the woman was well enough now for him to interrogate her.

When he reached the room he was greeted by the loud crying of the baby and an unmistakable smell which prompted him to bring his hands to pinch his nose, only to notice in horror that he had no nose to pinch. In alternative he stopped breathing, only to notice he felt no discomfort like he would as a human, he just stopped breathing and sniffing, and it looked like he could do that indefinitely, which was kind of obvious in hindsight.

He entered the room noticing the woman just lying in the bed uncaring of the distressed baby. Satoru stared at her for a good minute before opening his mouth.

“Aren’t you going to change them?”

The woman barely glanced at him in response to him addressing her directly before rolling her eyes.

“If it annoys you, then kill it.”

Satoru was sure that if he didn't witness with his own eyes this woman giving birth, then he would have never guessed these two to be related at all by her horrifying attitude toward the child.

He might be undead now, but still, leaving an infant to the care of such a vile human being was even too much for him.

Satoru completely lost any hope in the woman and just took the bundle in his own arms leaving the room with the crying infant. He went straight for the first basin available and filled it with water before unraveling the child from the dirty cloth which he proceeded to burn without a second thought.

He turned back on the child that had by now stopped crying and was wondering at the fact they were half submerged in water. He grimaced at the mess that was their lower half, casting a quick [Clean] luckily did the job as it both cleaned the child and water.

Oh, she was a girl, he hadn't thought about the gender till it was blatantly displayed before his eyes. He let the baby girl splash her little fists into the water as she seemed endlessly amused by the ripples she created. Truly, the minds of children were such wonderful things sometimes.

After he let her do as she pleased for a while he once more raised her and created a new cloth to wrap around her.

Now that she was wrapped once more, her attention shifted back to him, those two heterochromatic eyes seemingly twinkling with untold mischief as she gave Satoru a toothless smile capable of melting even the heart of the most coldhearted monsters.

That was when Satoru knew, he was fucked.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Faine turned in her bed, her breasts hurt again. She never thought she would come to hate her body. The gospel of the Gods regarded the human body as a temple of perfection that should be cured and cared for but, for how blasphemous the thought may seem, she felt like hers had become more a vehicle of evil at the service of the monster currently sleeping away after feasting upon her.

And wasn't that such an uncomprehensible situation in itself? When the monster took the abomination with him, she thought that finally she could have some peace, that she would never have to see or hear that thing again. But she was mistaken, apparently a monster will recognize another monster as their own, and that monster brought back the now giggling abomination just a bit later. Those two were monsters alright, for no normal child could ever find pleasure in the presence of the undead.

“Aren't you going to eat anything? For your daughter at least?... Sorry, that was a foolish question.”

If she didn't know any better, she might have interpreted that last part as a dry jab at her motherhood, or the lack thereof. But what would an undead know of parenthood, even more an unwanted one? And apparently that abomination was female, she didn't know if she should be disgusted such a being shared her own gender, or be happy that her future reproduction options will not be as rapid as if she was male.

She looked down at the hot stew the undead presented her with. To be clear, she had no intention of eating it, regardless of what her famished stomach demanded. Her body has been rather traitorous as of late.

Still, she was curious what kind of undead understood or worried about the comforts of the living... a clever one to be sure, to manage to look so sympathetic toward those he hates above all else.

“Maybe we have started on the wrong foot... would you tell me your name?”

The undead continued, regardless of her silence. She remained still, not moving an inch, not even acknowledging his existence.

“Umu... very well then, Takemi always said to take initiative, so... my name is Satoru, your average undead trying to live a tranquil enough afterlife.”

Faine blinked as different things hit her all at once. First, she didn't know undead could huff. Second, this one was apparently a comedian of some sort. Third, and most important, that was a name strangely too similar to some of the names the Gods left in their personal gospels.

As if to mock her even further, the undead scribbled something on a scroll before offering it to her, only to reveal the familiar language she had the privilege of learning as a descendant of the Gods. A language known by a handful of individuals and never seen outside the Theocracy.

The dreadful thought of this monster reading her mind and discovering the Theocracy's secret passed over her, chilling her blood. But such a spell should not exist, the same way an undead caster capable of competing with her in strength should not exist.

“How do you know... the language of Gods?”

She addressed the monster for the first time since she woke up.

“Umu... I see, let’s play a game then... I will answer a question of yours as long as you answer a question of mine, it sounds fair, right?”

Faine had no idea what kind of sick game you could come up with to reword an interrogation, but he was also offered information, as unreliable as it was, she could get something out of it if she could trick him.

Plus, she could not be forced to answer questions she didn’t want to. With the assessment of that, she slowly nodded.

“Good, now then... what is your name?”

Faine blinked, of all the questions she could have expected, this was not one of them, as simplistic as it was. She might have even understood if he asked who she was, that would have forced her either to reveal her position or remain silent, but by asking directly her name, he chose to not investigate on her role or allegiance.

“Faine.”

She answered curtly, as if even voicing that much had been physically painful.

“How do you know this language?”

She didn’t hesitate a second after answering his questions before asking her own.

“I studied it, like everyone else.”

‘Bastard’ Faine mentally growled at the non-answer. It was highly improbable that his answer was right, he should have been a follower of Lord Surshana, but if that was the case, he would have already mentioned as such. The other alternative... as outlandish as it sounded... was that he was an Outer Being, coming from the same

distant world as the Gods, the Greed Kings, and the Evil Deities... but that sounded completely outlandish.

She was so rapt up in her own thoughts that she almost missed the undead's next question.

“Why do you hate that child?”

Faine took a second to grasp that question. Why did an undead care about any of that? It was already strange that an undead did not attack the living. In her experience, even those with the gift of reason, like elder liches, could hardly contain their hatred for the living. And yet, this one seemed completely unbothered by that fact, even wasting a question on it.

“It is a disgusting half-breed.”

She had no intention of going into details about that thing.

A heavy silence fell over the room as the undead did not react to her words in any way.

“Why do you not attack the living? If you are trying to trick me into revealing something, you will be disappointed, no sane individual would ever trust an undead in any capacity.”

For all this seemed like a waste of a question, she would rather try to understand her foe to try and find something that could help her come out of this with the artifacts and her life.

“I do not understand your question... I do not feel animosity toward those who don't antagonize me... I guess that would seem like a rare trait among undead.”

The answer almost sounded like a guess, but the explanation, simple as it was, had Faine rethink their interactions. If what he said was true, could she have just passed him by and he would have let her go when they first met? No, that sounded absurd, there was no way

it wasn't all planned. An undead bordering two humanoid countries, being in the exact place and moment when she was escaping? The odds would have been abysmal. A far more logical explanation was that she had been targeted by a third party with no relations to the Elf Kingdom and Slane Theocracy.

“Where is the child's father?”

Her stomach tightened at the question, the little appetite she regained completely gone with those five words. She laid down on the bed, turning her back toward the undead and ignoring every other prompt to conversation, which luckily did not come.

She heard him leave the room a few minutes later.

She did not move for the rest of the day, only letting the filthy creature feed on her so it would not aggravate her nerves any further with its crying.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

It had been a month since Satoru came to this strange world.

He would be lying if he said that, even as a teenager, he never fantasied about the isekai genre, what kid born in the shitty world of 2138 hadn't?

Still, learning how to makeshift a diaper was never something he thought he would learn, at least not in another world.

It turned out life had still much more to offer him than he thought.

The baby was a strange case really, he noticed soon enough in his stay how his emotions were not what they used to be. He wondered if that had anything to do with his undead nature, he felt so... diluted, things that would have made him annoyed reduced to a mild frustrations, things that would have made him feel satisfied were now just making him feel content. And that was how the baby had

differentiated herself from everything else. She was the only one that made him feel something deeper, in a strange way, a sort of responsibility.

Was it the fact he took part and witnessed her coming into this world? The fact her own mother clearly didn't want anything to do with her? the fact that as a male he felt some kind of natural response toward an undefended child? Or maybe a mixture of the three, or none at all. He couldn't say. He only knew he wanted to keep taking care of her, not like there was anyone else to do it.

But that didn't mean he had remained idle in his desertic fortress.

He visited the nearby countries. The newly formed Re-Estize Kingdom and Baharuth Empire. To think such countries were born just a mere half a century ago was outstandingly interesting, for someone like him who lived in a country with millennia of history, seeing the origin of a country was something that filled him with visceral curiosity.

Then there was the Draconic Kingdom, while not as young, it was still a nation with barely a century under its name, and so he was still eager to see where it would go. Considering his new body, he didn't think time would be much of a worry in the future.

And then there was the Slane Theocracy, a nation who stood its ground for a whopping four centuries and counting, nothing impressive by Earth standards, but here? They might as well have been around since the beginning of human life.

He also had to reassess his initial opinion on the average inhabitant of this world. To say it in the kindest way possible, they were trash mobs, something relegated to the first spawning areas of Yggdrasil, or sometimes even worse. He never saw anyone who could remotely come close to Faine, let alone himself.

Speaking of which, the black-eyed woman had not spoken to him for a whole week after he apparently brought up the wrong subject. He initially thought that the father, who most probably was an elf, might have died. But that theory was easily disproven by how Faine treated her daughter, that was not how you treat someone who is the last memory you have of someone you cared about.

All other options were quite concerning, both for the woman and the child.

For the moment, she at least seemed to take care of feeding, which kind of was the only reason why he had not separated the two. He very much doubted he could give the child what she needed at the moment. Still, he would not be gone for more than a day and left intelligent undead summons in charge of his base while gone.

For now, he would lay low, apparently not too long ago a catastrophe befell this continent. Evil Deities they called them, their recorded appearances most similar to mid-tier bosses from Yggdrasil.

Her only source of information, Faine, was quite unhelpful. Not because she didn't know, but rather because she would not share. He didn't push the matter any further. He had spells who could help with looking through the mind, but he had no idea how any of them would work now that this was no longer a game, he risked messing up her memories, or worse, rendering her catatonic, which would mean there would be no one else left to take care of that child or naming her.

That was probably what unsettled him the most. The child did not possess a name, and he didn't feel like it was his place to do so.

He tried to shake off the uncomfortable subject. Still, there was one thing that he should be really worrying about now.

What was he supposed to do here in this world?

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Faine was sure of it now, this Satoru, this undead. He was not from here, she had no idea if he was from the same place as those who came before, but certainly not from this world. He asked too many foolish questions, he clearly knew nothing of Martial Arts, or Talents.

But this went to her advantage. She would use this to make herself look cooperative. Trustful even. She would divulge information that should have been common knowledge and some more. Nothing dangerous toward her country, of course, just enough to make the undead assume she came around.

She needed the freedom to move without being constantly watched by the undead he left around. Not that she couldn't put down the likes of Death Knights and Elder Liches, these might be legendary creatures for the average adventurer, but she was a God-kin, and she would sooner fall on her blade than let one of those sacks of bones get the better of her!

Once she got those off her back, it wouldn't take that much to escape. Satoru was gone for most of the day and she could easily get far away if she planned her escape soon after he left, maybe even manage to cross the Theocracy's before he realized she was gone.

To accomplish that she was willing to suffer the humiliation of accepting food from her enemy, she needed to soon get back on her feet and start training again. But that wasn't the worst thing. Since, for some reason Faine could not fathom, the undead lord took an interest in that accursed thing, she also needed to care for it to a

minimum. Feeding her and clothing her with what she was provided with.

She loathed it, even more now that the half-breed started growing hair. It was such an ugly thing to see her own hair attached to those of that rapist bastard. An half and half unnatural thing not meant to ever be born.

When she regained the strength to move freely, she had thought about killing it many times. She could easily snap its neck, or kill it a hundred other ways. But all of them would end with her own death by the hands of the undead, and then her country would never know where their precious artifacts disappeared to.

Speaking of which, the hardest part of the plan would certainly be reclaiming those. Faine had no idea where they could have been stored, she was not allowed out of a certain area of this fortress, being limited to her living quarters and an inner garden where some strange but very sweet fruits grew.

She would need to gain more freedom, meaning more trust, so that she could discover where they kept her items. But undead were patient by nature, so unbothered by time, so she will bid her time and come out on top in the end.

Still, there was something she could do while she worked toward that moment. Exercise and keep her mind and reflexes sharp.

The black-haired woman's entire body moved like flowing water as she struck imaginary foes and dodge invisible strikes, almost dancing in the room as she practiced her moves after a few months of little to no inactivity.

This was far from the best she could do, she knew that. The pregnancy certainly took a toll on her body, as did the captivity, but if she didn't start from somewhere she would never get better.

She almost slipped when babbling sounds interrupted her concentration making her almost misstep. Her eyes darted toward the only other occupant of the room. The creature observing her from its crib, those mismatched eyes glaring into her, as if the thing just found something interesting, the unintelligible babbling getting worse as the thing seemed to want her attention.

It was too soon for feeding, and the lack of smell indicated that there was no need for a change of clothes. That was all that useless parasite did, eat and shit, oh, and cry... luckily for her, the undead seemed to always calm it down, that being due to fear or some weird fascination it had for the undead creature, Faine could not say but was glad her sleep was less interrupted as of late.

She glared back at the thing, even though her expression didn't seem to be registered by the creature as it continued its endless babbling. She just sighed, asking the Gods for strength, as she just ignored it and kept on training.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Satoru had to thank the universe for his [Create Item] magic for, without it, he had no idea how much of his little funds would he had to spend to keep the growing baby clothed. That girl seemed to got through clothes like Ulbert went through archangels in the Empyrean Dungeon.

“Sasa!”

He heard the, by now, familiar high pitched squeal that symbolized the little minx spotting him.

She was a talker, always babbling something at whoever was available. And since she started crawling, it was an hassle trying to not lose her. Hence why he had created two Elder Liches for just that task. The exact same two Elder Liches that allowed him to

discover how to break the time limitation of his summons by using corpses.

“SASA!”

Well, he better move before she started crying. Apparently the girl could not stand being ignored. The undead overlord entered the inner garden where the still nameless child was playing around, he sat down among the grass, a simple act that would have garnered the envy of most living things back into his old world, and let the child approach him.

Of all he could say about this strange child, not eager was certainly not one of them. Even though the girl couldn't even stand up, he found her trying to climb atop him multiple times, to not speak about how she constantly demanded to be picked up every time he was around. He was sure Yamaiko would have had her heart stop every time the child pouted with that adorable frown of hers.

With a sigh, he grabbed the child currently trying to climb on his knees and positioned her on his lap much to her cooing and giggling. The black and white haired child proceeded to run her little hands over his World Item, probably attracted by its strange glow, like a moth to a flame, except there was no risk of her getting hurt in this instance.

Satoru let her do as she wished as he analyzed his current predicament. Hiding in Katze had been a smart move, he was quite isolated from everyone else who could prove to be a threat. It didn't take a genius to realize that a multitude of creatures from Yggdrasil had already arrived here before him, not with Faine's precious information.

Considering none of them was still around, he could only deduce something killed them, something aside from each other like in the case of the 8 Greed Kings.

Speaking of kings, he had to decide what to do with that Re-Estize's ambitious ruler who wanted to take over the Katze Plains. When he first heard the news from his undead spies, he thought the man a fool, who would waste resources for such a barren and useless land? That was until he realized the king wanted to consolidate this position to get an advantage over Baharuth.

An ambitious man, and they might have had a chance if it wasn't for the fact Satoru was here. They would have still had to deal with hordes of undead, a couple Death Knights and a handful of Elder Liches. But if they used some of their best adventurers, it might have been achievable.

Unfortunately for them, they will meet more than a couple Death Knights. He didn't plan to use anything more powerful than that to not arouse suspicion.

It would be a good and inconspicuous way to acquire a great quantity of corpses. He hummed in satisfaction at his own plan.

He was taken out of his train of thought by a weird muffled sound. He looked down only to see the child had latched on to his World Item with her mouth, slobbering saliva all over the place, well... that was disgusting, but he guessed that was just part of the tour for babies to try and put everything they see in their mouths.

He grabbed the unruly child by her back, unlatching her from one of the most powerful items in all of Yggdrasil, before using a quick [Clean] to remove the mess.

Satoru brought the child to his own eye level. Mismatched orbs now piercing his own red dots, like a magpie observing transfixed by a shiny object.

“No, don’t do that.”

Satoru tried to sound as stern as possible. The child’s smile fell, as an expression of deep concentration took over her baby visage as if she was trying to understand his words.

As soon as Satoru thought he had made his point, the loud sound of a fart echoed in the otherwise silent garden, curtesy of the now cheerful child who started laughing like a maniac.

Satoru raised his eyes to the heavens, wishing for patience.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Faine was confused to say the least.

She couldn’t understand what she was witnessing.

It was such a mundane thing, looking at a father gifting a game to his daughter and then stopping to show her how to play and play with her for a while.

But here there was no father, only an unholy undead, there was no daughter, only an abomination, and they certainly did not share any blood ties.

Yet, the scene did not change. What would have looked like a bonding moment for any human family was now desecrated by the two currently filling the roles.

The half-breed laughed as the wooden blocks in her hands changed colors every time she turned them. She had no idea what kind of sick game the undead was playing at with this. Was he trying to fool her? She had already shown enough times that she despised that

parasite, so showing any kind of love toward it certainly did not buy any points in her favor.

“Fafa!”

She cursed under her breath as the blasted thing called for her while waving around that color-changing cube as if to show her the amazing new toy she got. Faine could not stand the scene any longer, combined with that childish smile of the abomination, she just raised and left the room, much to the protest of the growing parasite.

She recognized the emotion that flickered in her human heart for a moment. Even if she would deny it to her dying breath, she recognized that oh so human emotion that that smile elicited. She buried it deep, under all her hatred and resentment, never to see the light of day again. She would not be fooled by that thing! Nor the undead!

Faine reached her room, slamming the door behind her, immediately disrobing from her more cumbersome clothes before starting to stretch her muscles, her boiling blood demanding an outlet for her rage.

Squats, pullups, pushups. She furiously worked a sweat, her muscles heating up at a worrying rate, but she didn't stop her furious workout. This usually worked most of the time, she would exercise until most of her rage and stamina were burned away, but this time... this time she really felt like her fury would not subside... maybe because, for once, the feeling was not directed at anyone other than herself.

The God-kin felt the missing sensation of a weapon in her hands... she really needed to start hacking away at something to work through this sensation.

The black-haired woman wondered if she could convince her jailor host to lend her a weapon... and an undead dummy.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

The undead stirred the eggs in the pan, this was his... what now? Tenth? Eleventh attempt? He kind of forgot by now... he had been at it the entire night, and this had become personal. His inner part was screaming at the waste of food, after all eggs were one of the few delicacies that could not be artificially made even back in 2138, and so were considered an extravagance few could obtain on the regular.

His mother bought exactly three of them each year, for his birthday, to make his favorite meal... the same meal he was trying to replicate right now. Luckily for him, eggs seemed to be a far cheaper good here, or else he might have burned through his entire savings.

He flipped the egg on itself, using a [Telekinesis] spell to make sure not to mess it up. It might have looked pathetic, but this was actually the first time he ever tried to cook something that wasn't a premade artificial meal in his almost thirty years of life.

As the omelet finally formed, he felt a sigh of relief escape his nonexistent lips. He took the omelet and added it on top of the rice he had got right on his second try before shoving it all in his inventory. As he discovered, his inventory had some kind of time magic mingling with it as food and other things could not rot, and remained the same as when he put them there even after months.

He hummed a familiar tune he could not put his finger on as he cleaned and set aside all the cooking instruments he used.

Today would be a year since he arrived here. A strange turn for his... life? Maybe existence would be a better term... Still, this had been the best year of his life still, his childhood excluded.

Maybe for most living in isolation, alone with an emotionless and mildly sociopathic woman, and a toddler who spent her time eating and expelling said food might have looked dreadful. To someone like him who had been used to working half of the day, sleeping the bare minimum to survive, and spending the rest of his day in a virtual reality to escape his real life? This looked quite similar to heaven.

The overlord wondered if he should get the child a room of her own now that she didn't need her mother's maternal milk any longer. He really wanted to separate the two since Faine unnerved him more and more by how she was looking at her own child with that absent gaze hiding her true thought and intentions.

Sure, the woman had been more cooperative compared to how they started with. No more undead this, undead that, but they were far from amicable... cordial might be the better word. Still, he would not trust her with a plant, let alone a child.

But maybe he should wait until said child was able to at least walk on her own. Not that she was far from it seeing how she tried to stand on her own feet everyday. He could admit, he admired her persistent, even when she fell back on her backside, she did not cry, she just pouted and tried to stand back up.

His emotions might have been suppressed as an undead, but he couldn't help but find that sight adorable. Maybe Yamaiko had always been right all these years, children were truly the best and most innocent beings on the planet.

Speaking of his old guildmate, he wondered when and where should he find an instructor for her education. He had no reference for that, nor could he take as an example the broken and capitalistic educational system of 2138.

Maybe he was worrying too soon, she was still a little girl more interested in trying to eat her toys than anything else. Plus, he should check if intelligent undead such as Elder Liches were capable of skills outside their race and job classes. In the Great Library of Nazarick they had some powerful liches as librarians which indicated their possible literacy and mathematic knowledge. Though, he wondered that, even if they had the knowledge, they had the skill to teach.

Bah! He was going too deep too soon, he will put that on the backburner for now.

Judging from the sunshine filtering through the small windows, dawn had arrived and he was eager to present the meal that took him the whole night to make.

As expected, he could already hear the sound of powerful blows landing from the training room he had created for Faine after she asked him for one. He obliged to her request for two reasons. First, he wanted to witness these so called Martial Arts for himself, second, he hoped that by being able to beat something on the regular, she would get all that violence and aggression out of her system, for the good of all of them.

He quietly entered the bedroom where both an empty bed and occupied crib were. The black and white haired child was turning in her sleep as she tried to escape the rays of the sun cascading down on her, as she pushed her face deep into her Gargantua-like plushie he had created months before when he was thinking about toys. He also made a Victim one and many other non-humanoid NPCs from Nazarick. Turns out [Create Item] was a far better skill in this world than its counterpart in Yggdrasil, seeing how the only limit seemed to be his creativity, contrary to the pool of items he could create in Yggdrasil.

Well, among all of his created plushies, he never thought the Gargantua one would become her favorite which she insisted came everywhere with her.

Was she lonely? Did she miss a friend? No, he was overthinking this way too much, she was just a child with a favorite toy.

He used one of his bony fingers to tickle her tummy making the girl start to giggle as she grabbed his finger with both hands trying to stop him.

“Sasa...”

She mumbled sleepily as her mismatched eyes fixed on him in recognition. Of all the nicknames he got in his life, which weren't many to begin with since most of them applied to his avatar's name and not his actual one, this was definitely the most adorable. Something he was sure Buku would be a fan of.

The toddler slowly stood up on her wobbly legs, never letting go of her plushie.

“Sasa, up!”

She demanded, like many times before, for him to pick her up. A request he obliged.

He settled her in the highchair he had created, bless his [Create Item] spell, and then proceeded to open his inventory and set the still hot omurice omelet in front of the child.

“Happy birthday, little one.”

The black and white eyed child's jaw fell open as, for the first time, her grip on the Gargantua plushie lessened letting it fall on the floor. The golden egg seemed to have completely stolen her attention as she inspected it with great curiosity before gripping her spoon as if

it was a shovel and digging in letting the still fluid egg on the inside spill out on the rice below.

“Oooohhh!”

Satoru chuckled at the exaggerated sound of the child who was still marveling at the sight of her special meal. This scene alone was worth all of his previous frustration at his many failures.

The girl finally got over her amazement and filled her mouth with a spoonful of omelet. Her eyes seemed to start sparkling as she happily giggled while swaying her feet up and down in excitement.

“Ahahah... is it good?”

Satoru could not help but laugh at the sight of the excited child.

“Good! Good!”

She repeated as she took another spoonful of the meal.

Like any of his strong emotions he felt his passive ability soon kick in, calming his own happiness, prompting him to internally sigh in disappointment at the suppression.

He still patted the girl’s head gently as she ate away happily at her meal. If nothing else, his forced calmness made him aware of the presence lurking just behind the door that gave into the kitchen. A single black eye spying on the two of them from the slightly open door. An eye that soon disappeared when his red dots met its gaze.

Well, if nothing else, the poor child would not have to suffer the woman’s glare today at least.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Faine prayed into the night, even as she got no answer to her calls, she kept on praying still, for that was all she could do while witnessing the outcome of a doomed endeavor of humanity.

A line of undead marched back and forth as they each dragged behind them one of more corpses. The whole process so efficient and orderly that Faine could have even found it fascinating if it wasn't for the dreadful nature of it.

They had started working while the sun was reaching the horizon and they kept on working with the same inextinguishable vigor even now with the moon high in the sky. Piling up corpses in a macabre mountain of death.

Men or woman, noble or commoner, whole or dismembered. It did not matter, they all joined the mountain, nonetheless. And she already had an idea about what such a pile could be used for.

Dark rituals were not new to the Theocracy, Lord Surshana was one of their glorious Gods, even though he did not take the life of precious humans to accomplish them, he rather use the inferior races who dared attack humanity for their sick and twisted pleasures to accomplish those rituals.

Re-Estize army had not been afforded the same mercy. Foolish as their actions were, she still hoped they would have managed to retreat when they realized how impossible their task was.

She lost the hope of that happening as every corpse passed her by. Tens of thousands must have been amassed by now. Seeing how humanity had already suffered a great blow to their numbers thanks to the Evil Deities, her heart sunk lower with every dead man who was piled up for no reason.

And to think... to think she had doubted her feelings toward that monster and the parasite after witnessing a tender moment she thought none of them was capable of.

Faine had truly seen them for the first time as a child and a being found himself taking care of them. The thought was blasphemous in itself, but her eyes did not betray them.

But now she understood. There was no mistaking it, the monster had truly shared that moment with the abomination in human skin, but that level of care could only be afforded because the monster saw another of its kind and not a human child he would have slaughtered without a second thought.

That made sense and finally closed the cycle she had tried to make sense of for more than a year.

She had witnessed the birth of a bond... a bond among monsters, the scourge of humanity. And she had mistaken it for the love and care any parent would afford their child, a blasphemous comparison and perversion of human love.

She needed to pray.

Pray for those poor souls.

Pray for forgiveness for her own misguided sinful thoughts.

Pray for the salvation of those whose doom was yet to come.

Pray for her own soul, so that she could be released from this torment.

By the end of it, she had forgotten what she was praying for in the first place.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

She ran down the corridor, her feet swift as she dodged around the many Elder Liches on her way, which only spared her a glance. She had only one objective on her mind.

She needed to save her friend!

She knew it was possible!

She darted around a familiar corridor before coming face to face with her last obstacle.

Using all her strength, she slammed against the door, pushing it open before darting inside.

The imposing figure of bone and shadow behind a paper-filled desk was what she was greeted by.

But that did not discourage her from carrying out her ultimate duty!

“Sasa! Garg hurt again!”

She cried out, tears almost spilling from her mismatched eyes as she ran to the undead and presented him her beloved friend and its torn arm. The first time that happened she had cried till her voice was no more. That was the moment when she discovered her Sasa was the most amazing person in the whole world, when he repaired her friend with just a flick of his bony fingers.

Sasa was the hero who could save the world and her friend, in her eyes there was no one greater than him.

“Umu... it seems Gargantua has suffered a bit of an accident... this actually reminds me of a similar situation the real one got in... would you like to hear it?”

She did not understand what Sasa meant when he spoke about the real one, her Garg was the only Garg in the world! But apparently, all her friends had been alive long before her and they all had incredible stories her Sasa told her before bedtime.

Her favorite stories were those around Uka, the mischievous fox spirit, still her favorite friend remained Garg, even if he was not as funny since he only stomped bad guys instead of playing with them like Uka.

She just wanted to be as smart as Uka and as powerful as Garg when she grew up. Yes, that's it!

“Yes!”

She finally said as she climbed onto Sasa's lap, trying to find the best spot among the hard bones.

“Now, do you remember on which floor Gargantua is located?”

Sasa asked her one of his silly questions. She was a smart girl and could remember these things easily, she was so smart she managed to learn how to count to twenty already while studying with Mr. Lich.

“Yes Sasa! Garg is on the 4th floor!”

Her reward was a cold hand ruffling her hair the way she liked it.

“Right... so, there was this time where a little group of sneaky thieves tried to enter my and my friends' home and managed to pass by Shalltear without her noticing.”

The black and white haired child pouted.

“Shall is such a silly-head! Letting bad guys pass without even noticing!”

She lamented even though she always thought that Shall was very cool ever since Sasa introduced her in one of his stories.

“I guess she is a little, like her creator...”

Sasa mumbled, getting in one of those moods she did not like.

“Anyway, where was I, yes, those sneaky thieves arrived on the 4th floor, trying to pull that trick on Gargantua as well... but something they did not expect happened...”

The young girl continued to listen, enchanted by the story about her best friend and how he kicked every last bad guy out.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Humanity was truly a race of stubborn creatures.

The more time he passed in this world and body, the more he had a hard time relating to the race he was once part of. Not when they continued to beat their heads against the same wall hoping the result would be different a second time.

Apparently Baharuth had the brilliant idea of capitalizing on Re-Estize's disastrous move by taking the plains for themselves instead.

There was no need to say that their attempt had ended up as poorly as Re-Estize's. And now he found himself once again with more corpses than he had any use for. In three years he had barely managed disposing of all those bodies from Re-Estize, creating more low and mid tier undead he had any need of. And now he found himself with another pile.

Luckily this time around, having more Death Knights on his side meant that many of those kills were turned into undead automatically without him having to dirty his own hands. But still, even if smaller, a pile of corpses he had no use for was still a pile of corpses he had no use for.

Maybe he could send an expedition toward that northern forest? Just to scout it out since there were no humans who lived there so kicking the hornets' nest would not be a risk. And even if he lost the undead, those were still useless corpses he had no use for in the first place.

Yes... that sounded like an interesting idea.

Still, he wondered if the Slane Theocracy would redouble their efforts in killing off his creations in some misguided effort to lower their numbers.

According to Faine they were probably trying to limit the undead's presence in the Katze Plains, fearing that a too large force of undead would end up invading one of the surrounding countries.

It was too bad for them that their losses were far greater than his. Even when they managed to eliminate a Death Knight or two with a few casualties, he still had thousands of them waiting around his fortress. He himself had long ago lost count of the numbers at his disposal.

He just let some low-tier undead patrol around the perimeter of the Katze Plains, accompanied by a single mid-tier undead, preferably a Death Knight since he had more useful pursuit for Elder Liches.

Speaking of which, he just received a report on the girl's progress.

He initially feared Elder Liches would have a problem having one of the living as a student, but they did not seem to share the so dreaded hate for the living, be it because they were not naturally created or because their creator had no such feelings, was still a mystery.

Either way, she was a gifted little thing, she absorbed her lessons like a sponge and had a photographic memory worth of consideration. He couldn't say if that was her elvish side, or if she was just that good.

She was learning the hiragana alphabet at a rapid pace for a four years old, already composing some words which she was eager to show him. Even though her teachers seemed to want to push her even further, increasing her hours, but he prohibited it. He didn't want her eagerness to transform into frustration.

He even used his now free nighttime to write down some of his and his friends' adventures in written format. He planned to give it to

her as a gift for her next birthday, seeing how she loved the few he told her as bedtime stories.

Speaking of birthdays, she had also asked him to teach her how to cook her favorite meal, omurice omelet. It seems like he had bewitched her since the first time he made it for her. Nowadays he could cook it perfectly at the first try most of the time. ‘Practice makes perfect, isn’t that right Punitto?’ he thought prompting the memory of a certain raid led by the plant heteromorph to resurge, something he should add to the collection.

To see someone share the joy of his precious memories made his nonexistent heart grow warm. He should have known she was a special one ever since she was born, as fierce as she was when she approached a level 100 Overlord without any inkling of fear.

The affection he came to cultivate for her was also the reason why he was dreading the moment she would ask him about herself, like all curious children will sooner or later. With a mother like Faine... it would fall on him to answer those questions about her parents and her lack of a name.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

“Sasa! Are you my daddy?”

The black and white haired child asked. She had been curious ever since she started reading some of the stories in Sasa’s books. The children like her always had a mommy and a daddy who loved them very much!

She too wondered if she had a mommy and daddy who loved her very much... her little brain clicked into place, just now realizing that she had someone who loved her very much and was her favorite person in the world.

So, it was only natural for her to ask her Sasa if he was her daddy.

“Umu... no, young one, I am not your father.”

The child blinked her mismatched eyes as she tried to concentrate to think of someone who could be her daddy other than Sasa.

“Do I have a daddy?”

She came to the realization that she might just not have one after all, as she couldn't think of anyone else who loved her more than her Sasa.

“I don't know...”

Weird, Sasa sounded weird, she never heard him like that. Nor did she know there were things he did not know, she always thought Sasa had the answers to everything.

“Do I have a mommy?”

She was kind of curious of that too, since mommies always cooked the best things, but she doubted anyone could make better food than Sasa.

“Oh, yes, Faine is your mother.”

Her jaw fell open at the seemingly casual revelation. She knew that name! That was the name of the scary lady she always avoided or spied on when she was training. How could that scary one be her mommy? She didn't even seem to know how to cook! And she had the impression the scary lady did not like her at all!

“I don't like that! I don't want her as a mommy!”

She vehemently denied, shaking her head from side to side.

“Sometimes we don't get what we want... but we still have to make the best of the hand we are dealt.”

She tilted her head at the unfamiliar words.

“I don't understand.”

She voiced her confusion at his words.

“It means that many times what we want is not what we get, but instead of being sad, we should adapt.”

Oh! That she understood! She nodded vigorously at his words.

“Like Mr. Punitto says!”

She exclaimed, now realizing how this was not the first time she had heard of this. She felt the cool hand of her Sasa mess up her hair.

“Yes, exactly like Punitto said.”

He confirmed as she nestled deeper in his lap.

“I also had to do it... my father... he was never a good person.”

That made her feel better, knowing that someone else also didn't have a daddy that loved them. Was she a bad girl for thinking that? She shook her head. Sasa was her favorite person, and she felt just happy they shared something since he wasn't her daddy.

Still, that left one question in her mind.

“Do I have a name?”

She asked next, this time she could feel the body of her Sasa shifting under her as silence ensued between them.

“... your parents... never gave you one...”

She could hear her Sasa sadness in his words. And that made her feel sad too. She wanted a name like her Sasa had, and all the little boys and girls had in her books.

“Can you give me a name?”

She asked hopefully, certainly her Sasa knew the best names there were!

The two dots in her Sasa's eyes seemed to sparkle for a moment, mesmerizing her even more than usual.

"I... I don't think that I should be the one..."

It was the first time she ever heard him hesitate. Was it a bad thing that she asked him to give her a name?

"I think you should be the one to choose a name for yourself, something you feel yours and yours alone, something that you feel represents you... take all the time you need, and I will be happy to call you by your name once you have decided."

The black and white haired child thought over those words from her Sasa before nodding with a confident smile.

"Yes! I will find the best and coolest name!"

She declared to the entire empty room with the confidence of someone who knew what their mission was in life.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

The massacre plains, that was the infamous name this land had gathered after the last years of misery and disaster that ensued for the neighboring country... how convenient to let out the fact they had been the ones mobilizing and invading only to get their deserved due for it.

Satoru had no remorse over what happened, he doubted he would even if he was still human. His spies reported to him how both the empire and the kingdom had decided to permanently close off their borders in fear, planning the construction of a vast wall, taking inspiration from the Holy Kingdom and their demi-human problem.

He was kind of relieved to be honest, he had no need for useless grudges from countries he couldn't care less for. If they decided

they feared him enough to not want anything to do with him, he was more than happy to oblige.

The only one country who continued to invade his territory without shame was the Slane Theocracy, undauntingly so. Not that it served any purpose. By now, the only country that didn't seem to be openly hostile was the Draconic Kingdom, be it because it was not interested as long as he stayed in his lane, or because they didn't have troops to waste with the beastmen looming over their doors, was anyone's guess.

He was happy to let them be as long as they did the same. He had no expansionistic aspirations. Even when he solidified his position in this world, the worst he did was exterminate every undead naturally spawned and not under his control. All except for a couple whom he found agreeable and interesting.

One of which he was in the presence of this very moment.

“Permission to come aboard, captain.”

He requested already knowing the answer, but indulging the lich's extravagance costed him nothing, so he did anyway.

“Permission granted, oh Great One!”

The elder lich cosplaying like a pirate answered with far more emotion than any undead Satoru ever met before.

This one was such a strange case, the first time Satoru met him, he was fascinated by the Ghost Ship he commanded, imagine his surprise at how the lich despaired when he took control of the undead vessel with his natural abilities. The Overlord was sure that if it wasn't for the physical limitations the elder lich would have cried himself to death.

He almost made Satoru feel bad about it, almost being the key word. He agreed to release the vessel nonetheless when the lich swore he would acknowledge his rule over the Katze Plains and offered his services to him.

The lich didn't seem to have an ounce of pride in that regard, not hesitating a second before submitting as long as he could have his wife back. Satoru never had the courage to ask in which way the lich considered the vessel his bride, if it was just a pirate saying or if he actually felt they were married in the traditional sense. Considering the vessel was an undead entity, it could have gone either way.

“Uncle Grel!”

The child atop his shoulder cried out waving her arm in the lich's direction as they landed on the ship's deck.

“Young one, I see you have bettered your tastes.”

The captain lich said with what almost sounded like pride at the new captain-like outfit the girl was sporting, after requesting Satoru to create one for her.

He placed her down on the deck, letting her scurry away toward the elder lich.

“Uncle! Now we can go with auntie and sail the land in search for treasure and bad guys! Like in the stories!”

The child started jumping up and down in excitement... if he knew that having her read Blue Planet's History of Navigation would have had such an effect on her... well, he would have still given it to her, only downside was that now she insisted on sailing somewhere.

Luckily for him, he could just have Greluné go on his usual patrol around the border of his territory. That was his job after all, only difference was that he and the child would be aboard for a couple days.

It was a lucky thing that among all the natural undead born in this world, Greluné seemed to hold no animosity toward the living, unless they threatened his beloved wife.

“Me and my wife will be happy to have you with us for this travel!”

The undead proclaimed, it seems like the girl had grown on him during the few time they met when he and Satoru had to discuss patrol routes.

The ship itself... herself? Seemed to agree as it sped up as if to show her own agreement with her husband’s sentiment.

“Woah!”

He felt an invisible smile creep on his face as he looked at the child’s shining eyes as she looked down the bulwark of the ship at the land passing by below.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Faine sent splinters flying with a single kick. Her Martial Arts were bettering by the day. All this unarmed combat had at least that advantage.

Unfortunately, her mood was not of the best since the thing came back from her trip. She, at least, found herself enjoying the time she passed alone while those two monsters went only the Gods knew where.

She decided that would be the opening she needed to escape, by the time they noticed she was gone, she would already be back in the Slane Theocracy if not the capital.

Now, she only needed to know how to recover her artifacts. In all these years she had been a prisoner, she had never seen the undead show them around even once. To the point she started to doubt he had them in the first place, but there was no other option, he was the only one who could have taken them.

She continued pummeling the dummy with her fists and feet, until the sound of something falling over caught her attention.

Much to her chagrin, that half-breed had fallen over at some point. But instead of starting to wail incessantly like she expected, the small monster in human skin just stood up again and tried mimicking Faine's own movements, failing miserably, and almost falling over again.

As expected, its movements were abysmal, almost a pain to watch for someone like her. Faine scoffed internally, that thing had both the genes of the Gods and Greed Kings in it and was no better than any other child its own age.

Disgraceful, but also reassuring to know the monster will be powerless.

She turned, ready to ignore what she had just seen, till an idea made its way through her mind.

She abruptly turned toward the leech.

"You are doing it wrong."

She said coldly, this was probably the first time she ever addressed that abomination directly. It made the bile in her stomach turn over, but it would be worth it.

The parasite seemed as surprised as it could be while mimicking real emotions.

She did not give it the time to address her directly as she continued.

“You can’t execute the Martial Art if you don’t have a target, missing will only make you fall over, if you want to practice you have to punch something directly, you can use that wall.”

She inclined her head toward the stone wall on the side. The foolish thing did not even think it over before obeying her instructions.

It tried to mimic Faine’s own movements, failing miserably, as its fist impacted the wall making the thing yelp in pain as it nursed its fist.

Faine had to suppress a smirk at the thing’s misery and pain. It was nothing compared to what Faine had to suffer, but it was a start. She kind of wanted to see how much that abomination could take before giving up.

“Fool, those movements are completely wrong, you must use your legs as an anchor before concentrating your power into your fist.”

The God-kin instructed before demonstrating the [Strong Strike] Martial Art once more, making sure that parasite would try again now that she had showed it the basics once more.

There was no way it could actually do it. She doubted something that small had the brain capacity to sustain the Martial Art, and even geniuses would take at least two to four weeks to get the feeling for a Martial Art.

She would enjoy seeing the thing harm itself in its senseless pursuit. After all she could not be blamed if that thing decided to punch the wall trying to imitate her.

The half-breed was persistent if nothing else. Punching that wall over and over, even when its knuckles began to redden and the skin began to scrape away with each failed blow.

Faine had not seen that kind of determination in a long time, the abomination continued to punch away, refining its movement in the slightest every time, even though new tears of pain dropped from its eyes with every impact.

She could not lie, a part of her hoped for this outcome, to see that thing cry in pain without her being faulted for it.

She made sure to give it some pointers and random tips every now and then to try and keep it motivated to hurt itself more.

That was until something caught her eyes, those two tiny legs settled in a strained position as she felt some energy gather in the abomination's fist. Before she could stop it, the punch impacted the wall with a very different sound, making some of the dust from the ceiling come down.

Faine felt her jaw fall in the slightest. It was unrefined, it was brutish, it was weak... but poorly as it was executed, that still was a Martial Art.

How could that be?! After only a couple hours of trying and some minor instructions... how could that thing have already reached this result that would normally take weeks even for geniuses?!

Even her perverse glee at seeing it hurt itself was set on the backburner for a moment as the reality dawned on her.

Was this abomination only this pathetic because it never applied itself? Was this just a glimpse of what it could become in the future?

A danger... a monster... truly worthy of her corrupted bloodline?

The monster turned toward Faine, all its previous pain seemingly forgotten as it beamed at her with a smile shining like the morning sun. Those mismatched eyes, the reminder of how that parasite was

put in her body and by whom, fixed on her, making the God-kin flinch.

“Look mommy! I did it!”

Faine did not hesitate, her instinct took over as her hand moved on its own across the thing’s face, snapping its head to the right with her sudden blow.

“Never! Never call me that again!”

She growled out before storming away.

...

She should not have done that.

It was the conclusion she reached after she tore half her room apart.

Not because the abomination didn’t deserve it for daring to call her that. But because there would be consequences.

And said consequences manifested in the form of a towering undead entering her room without knocking for once.

The two glared at each other, red dots into pitch black eyes. The dark miasma surrounding him sending a jolt of existential fear down her spine, even though she tried to resist and remain unbothered.

“What do you want?”

She growled out, sounding like a cornered beast, which she partially was.

The undead slightly raised his skeletal hand, Faine expected a spell, this could be her end. All because of that abomination! She had no doubt all the good will she gathered in these years just went down the drain.

“Why? Why would you harm your daughter like that?”

The question was uttered in a chilling-cold tone. But Faine would not be fooled, she was a step away from being reduced to a stain on the wall, regardless of the tone used.

And yet, if this was her end, she would at least go out with no regrets.

“That thing is not any daughter of mine! I have no children! That is just a monster its rapist bastard of a father implanted in me as he desecrated my body over and over for his sick pleasure!”

She spat out the truth as it was, each word more venomous than the previous as the disgustingly ugly reality was vomited out and laid bare.

Silence ensued between the two. Waiting for the inevitable.

But the undead did not strike, no, he lowered his hand, his aura receding, making Faine release the breath she didn't realize she was holding.

“What do you want?”

He asked. The irony of how the tables have turned was not lost on her with that question.

“My gear, I want it back.”

She was done playing around, if he wanted to know, she will let him know.

She felt those two red dots scrutinize her for what seemed to be an eternity.

“Very well then.”

Faine blinked, she was sure she must have misheard him. He couldn't just have accepted to give her back the artifacts of the Gods, just like that.

“I don’t care if you don’t consider her your daughter... you will act like her proper mother, lie, pretend if you have to, but you will do it... and only when she will have no further need of you, only then you will have everything belonging to you back in your possession.”

Faine blinked. What kind of sick game was this monster playing at? The only thought of having to interact with that abomination made her sick, let alone action as if she was.... Its mother!

But, that was the first, and maybe last chance she would get at seeing the divine artifacts again. Not counting she had no idea what her refusal here would bring upon her.

Still... this was vile! She couldn’t imagine a worst torture than having to constantly be around and even pretend to care for the reminder of her violation and humiliation. for an indeterminate amount of time no less...

“What guarantee would I have... that you will keep your word.”

She seethed inside, voicing her doubt through her clenched teeth.

“I may lie, deceive, and scheme to reach my ends... but in my entire existence, I never once broke a promise I made... I am afraid you will not get anything more than that from me.”

He said that as if she had any choice on the matter in the first place.

It was displeasing, upsetting, and that was putting it mildly, but she will have to go along with this charade. Even though she despised all of it from the bottom of her heart.

“Fine!”

She spat out, regretting her words immediately after they escaped her mouth.

“Good.”

He didn't say anything more than that as he turned around to leave.

“Wait! I have one condition!”

She immediately tried to stop him, which prompted him to turn around to hear her out.

“What is it?”

His tone was chilling-cold, the same way it was when he first addressed her.

“I will not give that... child... a name! And that is not negotiable!”

She would not do that, she would not acknowledge its existence any more than she had to, no matter if she would have to fake her hated newfound parental role. She would not acknowledge it as a creature worthy of a name!

The undead did not answer her, and Faine was starting to fear he changed his mind with that last demand of hers, only for a scoff to echo inside the room. Till that moment, she didn't even know undead could scoff in the first place.

“As if I would let such a vile excuse of a mother name her in the first place.”

In all these more than seven years, this was the first time Faine heard the undead sound remotely scornful or outraged, and yet, the venom in his words hit her like a Dragon Lord's attack.

She remained standing there long after the undead left her room, his last words echoing in her mind till her brain snapped into focus once more and she gritted her teeth.

‘As if the judgment of a filthy life-hating undead are even worth being pondered!’ she dismissed the comment pushing it out of her mind, but the words would stick with her far longer than she was afraid of.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

“The answer is 15 Mr. Lich!”

She waved her hand in the air as she answered the question, like she heard normal kids did in her stories, even though she was alone in here.

“Wrong, this is not a multiplication, we just went over exponentials.”

She pouted but immediately started to go over what she did wrong. This is why she liked Mr. Lich very much, he was never mad at her, no matter how much she messed up, he just said things how they were. Not like that scary lady who she still didn’t believe was her mommy, even though Sasa never lied to her.

“...Is it 125?”

She tried again. Receiving a nod from the skeletal undead.

“Exactly, now, revising your fractions.”

The undead turned toward the magic board, but before he could go on, the child raised her hand once again.

“Mr. Lich! I have a question!”

The undead turned back.

“Do you have a name?”

She asked, as the thought of her own name had been a constant in her mind since the concept was explained to her.

“I am Night Lich, that has been my designation since my creation.”

The undead answered not really addressing the question she posed.

“But that is just your race, I mean Satoru is also an undead lich, but he has a name.”

She tried explaining herself the best she could manage with her current understanding.

“Master has a name, he did not grant me one upon my creation, I live to serve the Almighty One, if it was not granted by him, it means a name is not necessary.”

The black and white haired child did not like that answer, not at all. If that was true, it meant that her own parents thought she was not worth a name... which Satoru proved it was an incorrect fact.

“Sasa once told me that you should find a name for yourself, something that you feel like represents you.”

For the first time since she could recall, her teacher seemed unsure on how to proceed or respond to her words.

“The Supreme One said so... I shall endeavor to find such a thing, our Creator’s intentions are often beyond the scope of our feeble minds.”

The skeletal undead sounded reverent, making the young girl giggle. She had no idea why everyone thought such funny things about Sasa, he was wise, that was for sure, but she understood what he said most of the time. And when she didn’t, she always had him explain it to her.

Her Sasa was not as scary as most people made him sound.

From there on, they resumed the lesson. She was not that great at math, but her teacher seemed kind of absent minded for the rest of the lesson, which was a first.

The midday bell rang through the fortress, announcing the zenith of the sun, and the end of her lessons for the day.

She closed her notebook, she wondered what would lunch be today. Revenant Sous-Chef was very harsh and would throw a fit if she

was late, something about ruining her perfect food by letting it cool down. That one was the second most passionate person she knew.

“Young one.”

She turned around toward the skeletal undead.

“I decided, I shall be known from now on as Iguvald.”

Her black and white eyes widened before starting to shine in excitement. Mr. Lich, no, Mr. Iguvald had chosen his name so easily! She only wished she could do the same!

“It is nice to meet you Mr. Iguvald!”

She beamed a smile at the undead.

“What is your name, child?”

The now named Night Lich asked putting an end to her excitement.

“I... I still have not chosen one.”

She admitted, feeling bashful now that she had witnessed someone who did in a few hours what she couldn't do in months.

“I see... well, once you decide, I wish to hear your name.”

The sincerity in the lich's words caused her smile to return. Taking a page out of one of her favorite books, she untied one of the black ribbons on her white locks and tied it around the bony wrist of the curious undead.

“It's a promise then! You will have to keep this till our promise is fulfilled!”

With that, a oath was sealed between Iguvald the Night Lich and a nameless half-elf.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Satoru thought that finding one of the two living beings in his fortress would be easy.

Apparently, that was not the case.

Even with detection magic, somehow he could come back with only one life source, coming from the room of a certain woman.

Only thinking of her made him uneasy. The woman kept up her part of the deal, or at least she did better than before. Actually interacting with that child, calling her a mother was the longest stretch of the world Satoru ever witnessed, but at least she didn't treat her any longer like she didn't exist. Keeping up her combat lessons, which he oversaw himself to make sure Faine did not go overboard with the poor child.

Satoru couldn't say he pitied the woman, he might have if he wasn't undead, no, not even that, he might have felt bad for her if it wasn't for the fact she treated her own child like trash, regardless of how she was conceived.

He could not fathom how that resentment could fall from the father to the offspring.

Children were the most precious thing for a parent... or maybe he was just lucky to have had one of his parents who thought like that.

Before he could dwell anymore on that, he felt one of his undead react to its aggro being tested. That was nothing new considering how his patrols were attacked from time to time, mostly by the Slane Theocracy.

But this time, the undead in question was one of those who patrolled the outside of his fortress, which would normally garner some panic on his part, but he had an inkling on who was responsible for this.

The Overlord teleported to the location of the affected Death Knight who was now searching around now that his aggro was active and set.

A quick scan of the area revealed the culprit. He immediately ordered his Death Knight to stand down and descended toward the Night Lich standing on the side. He was one of the five Night Liches he had created, four of which he used for ordinary administration, and the last one was the girl's personal tutor.

He had no doubt on which one this was.

“Youths are such problematic creatures sometimes, so unruly toward their caring elders.”

He made sure to emphasize his words as if he was ranting to the Night Lich who, on his part, remained silent and still. If Satoru wasn't an undead, he might have mistaken that stoicism for paralyzing fear.

“You wouldn't know where that little one ran to, now, would you?”

He tried to sound authoritative, if he knew anything about that child, it was the fact she was protective of those around her. and as expected, she emerged from the Night Lich's gown, panicking and flustered.

“No Sasa! Don't be mean to Iguvald!”

She pouted at him with the fierceness only a nine years old could possess.

‘Iguvald, huh...’ it was only kind of strange how she managed to bring personality out of undead summons to the point some of them chose a name for themselves. He almost got an heart attack when he heard the Revenant he summoned for cooking chose to call herself Shabu Shabu, he had no idea summons had some Japanese

culture ingrained in their brains. Well, that specific Revenant was an event-only summon and his lore was literally being a disgraced Japanese chef, so it kind of made sense...

He tried to shake the train of thought off of him and return to the current circumstances.

“And whose fault is that?”

He asked, not really trying to sound scolding. She already got enough of that from her natural parent.

“Now, what did I tell you last time?”

He looked down at the sheepish black and white child.

“Not to bother the patrolling Death Knights.”

She admitted looking at her shoes. Satoru remained silent, expecting.

“...And not to hide inside the liches’ robes.”

She continued pouting and avoiding his gaze.

“Now, apologize to Mr. Death Knight.”

Satoru pointed at the Death Knight he had to pacify.

“But Sasa! I was just playing hide and seek with Ror!”

The girl tried to protest making Satoru raise an eyebrow, if he only had one.

“Ror?”

He questioned the new name he did not hear before.

“Yes, he told me that was his name when I asked!”

At her words he turned toward the very much not-talkative undead tank. Did she just assume one of his grunts was his name? Either

way, now that he looked better, he could clearly see a white ribbon tied to one of the horns of the undead's helmet, a sign of the fact he was one of those with a name.

He sighed. Children would be children, he could not expect for her to be satisfied with toys forever... still, the girl clearly needed a friend her own age. It would be a shame if her social growth got stunted... like his was...

If there was anyone who could understand what the lack of friends did to someone, that one was certainly him.

Unfortunately, Yggdrasil did not allow for any child-looking enemy or summon, for obvious reason of maintaining the rating as low as possible. Even the NPCs Buku designed with great love were just normal elves set at the lowest height possible and carefully designed to look child-like, fortunately there were no such strict restrictions with settings.

But even if he wanted to try and replicate that, he completely lacked all the materials needed to create an NPC, let alone the fact it might not even work like that in the New World.

In his almost decade of living here, one of the things that never stopped surprising him was the variety of spells and how they functioned differently.

He would think of something...

“Either way, it is your bath time.”

He stated the reason he came to search for her in the first place.

Her mismatched eyes brightened instantly.

“Can we wash each other's back again?!”

She asked hopefully while vibrating in place as if she was holding back from starting to jump up and down in excitement.

It was weird to think that bath time used to be one of her least favorite activities until he introduced her to Japanese onsen concept to her. It was quite an expensive hobby back in 2138, guys like him could at best afford those low-quality places where water was not so clean and they had you pay each second you stayed in. And the first time he proposed it, he was at his wits' end.

Luckily, it turned out not only to be a turning point for her opinion on bath time, but also, a discovery for him of how good a proper onsen could feel. There were few things he could recall being as relaxing as that.

Washing each other's back was just a way for him to make her stay put and not splash around in the hot water, but it turned out to be her favorite activity. And he honestly found it adorable how she focused on trying to clean every bone on his back.

"Sure, we can do that."

He finally answered her, making a smile blossom on her face from ear to ear.

"YAY!"

She cried out in joy so she immediately darted toward the entrance to the fortress.

Satoru just stayed there for a moment, shaking his head.

'That child...' he thought in amusement, he had long ago resigned to the fact he had been designated as a parent, and honestly, she was one of the few who could still bring out some emotions from underneath his undead mind.

Sharing his and his friends' stories, seeing her grow and learn, seeing her appreciate his gifts... filling the role of a parent was

never something he thought he could do, let alone enjoy, and yet, it was undeniable, she chose him as much as he chose her.

Father and daughter found each other from across two worlds.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Sasa was late... he was never late... not on this day, not on her birthday!

The girl looked down at her steaming hot omurice omelet. Her favorite food made specifically by Sasa for her every year. She used her spoon to bring it to her lips. It was sweet and tasted like home, as it always did, but something was missing this time around.

Sasa was not here enjoying the moment with her. And that made her sad.

What did he have to do that was so important he couldn't be there on her birthday?

She continued to eat her breakfast in silence, if she knew, she would have asked Iguvald to keep her company.

The door opened, making the black and white haired girl's hope rise for a moment, only to reveal the stoic figure of her combat instructor... and mother.

The woman barely acknowledged her existence as she moved without uttering a word to gather her own breakfast.

The black-haired woman sat in front of her, surprising her daughter.

“Ten years ago, the worst day of my life happened... my hope of returning home after almost a year of imprisonment was taken away... and you ripped your way out of my body.”

The mismatched eyed child decided to ignore the older woman. She might have started to acknowledge her existence during these last

years, and also train her in combat. But she never forgot the slap she received when she first tried to address the woman as her mother.

The child kept on eating. This was turning out to be the worst birthday ever.

“You think that one considers you his child?”

The woman continued, uncaring if the girl paid attention to her or not.

“He just knows whose child you are, the bloodlines you possess, and your potential... you will be his little trump card he will play when the Theocracy and Dragon Lords decide to fall down upon him to avoid the rise of another Greed King.”

The words were delivered with an ironic tone, as if she found the very concept absurdly funny. The girl’s grip on her spoon tightened to the point the metal was starting to bend under the pressure.

“You are a liar.”

She muttered under her breath as she knew Sasa would never do such a thing. He was the only one she could count on in this world, the only one who took care of her when her parents abandoned or despised her.

“You poor fool, you don’t know undead like I do... they don’t perceive emotions like we do... but some of them are tremendously intelligent, to the point they can manipulate human emotions to serve their needs... there is a reason why they are a race to be killed on sight, let an undead intelligent enough alone, and you will find a disaster to deal with down the line.”

The black-eyed woman explained with certainty in her tone. As if her words were just a fact and nothing less than that.

“I am not a weapon, and Satoru is not that kind of person! I am happy here as I am!”

She vehemently denied the woman’s words, only for her to laugh in her face, a cold and cruel ring. That was the first time she heard her laugh, and it was more terrifying than when she hatefully glared at her.

“It is so amusing that you think you have a choice in the process... that you don’t understand yet... you were never meant to be happy...”

The black-haired woman raised from her seat, bringing her face just before the girl’s, their gazes never faltering.

“Monsters like you will only destroy, and burn, everything around them... everything you love and hate, will be turned to cinders and ashes... That! Is your nature, and nothing will ever change it... the only thing that can be changed is the one wielding you, and that will inevitably get burned too at some point.”

The words cut through her little soul, even if she didn’t understand why they hurt so much if she knew they weren’t true.

“It is in your blood, that vileness and destruction... so enjoy it till it lasts, this peaceful fragment of your existence... for your nature will sooner or later take over.”

And with that, she was left alone with her thoughts and those words keeping her company.

That was, until the door opened again to reveal none other than Satoru.

“So, you are already up and awake... sorry for my lateness but there was an urgent matter to att-“

He must have noticed something strange since he stopped in his tracks.

“Is everything alright?”

He asked, his voice more contained and focused. Showing more care than anybody else would, a sharp contrast with the only natural parent she had ever known.

“S-Sasa... do you want me to f-fight for you?”

She felt some tears start gathering in the corner of her eyes, even if she really didn't want to cry. She immediately felt a velvety arm envelope her.

“No, of course not, look at me.”

He whispered in that reassuring tone of his she had learnt to rely on since her earliest memories.

“When you started training, I thought it was good for you to spend some time with your mother, and learn to defend yourself while doing it... but if you want, you can stop.”

She felt something warm deep inside her wash away everything else at those words. She knew that evil woman was lying, she knew her Sasa would never do something that cruel to her.

“No, I want to continue, I want to be as strong as you one day... and help others like you did!”

She said, regaining some of her confidence.

“That's a good goal, you should always help out your friends.”

The undead said as he gently motioned for her to follow him.

“Speaking of which... I have got a surprise for you.”

He said as any lingering sad feelings of her was swept away by curiosity as the undead escorted her back to her room.

He opened the door, revealing her very much not tidy room. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary except for a half-nervous half-scared black-haired and crimson-eyed girl standing in the middle of it.

She blinked as she eyed the girl up and down, noticing very strange details... like the fact she had two small black horns erupting from her head and half-hidden by her hair... or the fact she had a tail... or the fact she had little dark scales covering part of her skin.

All in all, the slightly older girl looked pretty weird, but she was not one to judge.

“This is Draudillon... her parents were very naughty and stepped where they didn’t belong, while I resolve the situation with them, I hope you two will be fast friends.”

She felt Satoru give her a gentle push toward the other girl before closing the door behind her, leaving the both of them alone in silence.

The mismatched eyed girl looked straight into the reptile crimson eyes of her new... friend?

“Umu... Hi...”

She tried to greet her with a wave, only for the girl to not move an inch in response, as if she was a doll.

“A-are you also a prisoner?”

The horned girl finally said something, even though it took the younger girl a second to understand what she was implying.

“I live here, why would I be a prisoner?”

She asked, unsure of what else to say to the weird girl.

“B-but the undead...”

“Satoru is great! Isn’t he?! He brings me the best toys and knows lots of things and tells lots of great stories! Oh, and cooks the best omurice omelet!”

She immediately interrupted whatever the older girl was about to say as she felt like defending her Sasa, no matter what.

The black-haired girl flinched at her enthusiasm and seemed unsure of how to proceed, not that the mismatched eyed girl knew the answer.

“Today is my birthday.”

She said the first thing that came to mind.

“Happy... birthday?”

The crimson eyed girl seemed unsure on the congratulation.

“Your name is... kinda hard, can I call you Drau?”

She received no answer to that.

Maybe the older girl was just shy.

She did not waste time and grabbed her hand, noticing how rigid the other girl’s appendage felt.

“C’mon! I am going to introduce you to Garg!”

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Augh, of all the things that could happen... he had to abduct the royal family of the only kingdom that had yet to pick a fight with him...

Well, in his defense, it wasn’t exactly his fault that they chose to travel back from the empire to their country cutting through his territory. What did they expect from a land full of undead?

He honestly could have just not cared and did as he pleased if they were just some nobles, but a royal family? That meant a war worse than any invasion he ever suffered on his territory, possibly worse than even Re-Estize or Baharuth. Not counting this family descended from the Brightness Dragon Lord, which meant he could also attract the ire of the Argland Council.

In short, a true mess.

Luckily, no one important died, so the meeting went pretty well. He even managed to negotiate an armistice allowing the Draconic Kingdom passage through his land as long as they paid a certain amount. He left those details to the Night Liches. He was a salaryman, what did he know about medieval fantasy kingdoms' taxes?

He also somehow managed to make sure young Draudillon would be able to visit from time to time as a playmate. Even though the king and queen were very skeptical at first, he insisted assuring no harm will befall anyone.

That child really needed someone her own age to interact with. That, to him, was more valuable than any tax. All in all, what could have ended badly, just ended up with a treaty and a couple of signatures.

When he came back to get Draudillon to her parents, he found the two girls playing with some of his magical toys. He was happy they had managed to become friends so quickly, but that was the magic of being so young, they did not overthink social interactions like adults did.

When he tucked the black and white girl into bed that night she was far too excited at the prospect of seeing her friend again and stayed

awake through two of his stories in their entirety before her adrenaline run out.

Things seemed to be turning around in a good way.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

She parried the blow with a slick movement. She had learnt her opponent patterns by now. Even though she was still no match for her speed, she could still anticipate some moves.

But she didn't want to fail! Not again! She didn't want to let Sasa down! Not when she had requested one of his friends' weapons to use!

She was so fascinated by the tale of the noble warrior Takemi, that she asked her Sasa if he had any equipment of his. She almost melted in excitement when he presented her with a blade of his own creation, and that he even used at some point. Then she begged him to let her use it in her next combat class. Even if Sasa was reluctant at first, he finally agreed, as long as he was there to monitor the event.

She barely dodged another slash, but received a kick directly to her guts for it.

She spat out some saliva as the kick pushed the air out of her and she stumbled back.

"I-I'm okay."

She said as she saw with the corner of her eye her Sasa ready to intervene. But she would not let it end like this! Not when she was wielding a weapon as legendary as this!

She looked up at her opponent. Those cold black eyes looking down at her as if she was trash. Those same eyes that followed her back since she could recall. Those same eyes that stared at her as the

woman spewed her venomous words on how she would only bring ruin to all she loved!

She would prove her wrong!

She would prove that she was a hero like the ones in the stories!

She recalled the tale of Takemi and the Sea Dragon Sulphur, how he used his ultimate skill to bring him down once and for all!

She felt a bolt of lightning pass through her whole body, starting from her hands wielding the blade, to her feet, to her chest, and finally to her brain.

Something just clicked into her mind, as if reminiscing a long forgotten memory with full clarity.

An instinct she never knew she possessed in the first place.

Her body moved as if not guided by her own orders, her mouth opening, uttering words she could only recall from a story.

“[Dance of the Crimson Lotus]!”

A crimson light enveloped everything as she rushed forward. She barely registered seeing the shock and... fear? Appear in those black eyes she had despised all her life.

Then a shadow obscured her view as a loud clash of metal against something hard echoed through the whole courtyard.

It took her a few seconds to realize she had been stopped. She blinked as the strange sensation that overtook her just vanished as quickly as it came.

Her mismatched eyes followed the no longer shining blade in her hand only to see it was blocked by a familiar skeletal hand adorned with rings.

She immediately relented her tight grip, letting the blade fall from her hands, her panicking apologies got stuck in her throat as the skeletal hand was revealed to her in full. A large crack now going across it, not a deep one, but still... that was the result of her own actions.

She hurt her Sasa.

‘Everything you love and hate, will be turned to cinders and ashes...’ the haunting words came back to her mind.

It was true... she was a monster.

X-x-X-x-X-x-X-x-X

Faine could not help but cackle in irony, alone in her room.

A sad and demented sound, a thing in between laughing and crying.

Was she not proven right?

Was this not what she predicted?

Nothing good could come from such a vile act upon her body.

She was right!

That one truly was a monster!

How else could such strength be explained?!

No child should be able to be that powerful?!

God-kin or not, a monster was a monster.

She had already grown stronger than most outside the Black Scripture, and her body was yet to mature...

What a frightening existence.

Maybe now even the undead would understand, now that he himself suffered the consequences of his nurturing of that thing!

That such unholy spawn could be conceived by her own womb still baffled her! What kind of vile monsters had the Greed Kings been for their descendants to be such a plight upon the world?

That thing had to die before it could be allowed to reach its full potential. It could not be controlled, it would just rip and tear everything around it. She started with its toys when still but a toddler, and now it will soon be living beings that would suffer her wrath.

For the good of the entire world, for every living and unliving thing...

That nameless thing had to die!

End of ACT I

Commissioned by **dragronsbane** and **anonymous**

A.N.

And that is it for act 1!

Hi everyone, to clarify a few things before I start my comment on this one. This story was supposed to be a one-shot, but the more I wrote, the more I realized that it would be impossible to write the whole thing without skipping huge chunks of character development. So instead, I decided to turn this sponsored idea of mine into a 3 Act commedia. And this was but the first and most tranquil of acts as it dealt with Zesshi's (calling her that even if it isn't her name here) childhood.

The next two Acts will deal with her adolescence and adulthood respectively. And, to be clear, she physically developed at a

human rate till now, but her adolescence will be extremely slowed down due to her elf genes (that was mostly to there being no point in having her in diapers for years, or crawling around barely speaking for a decade).

Now, while it might not be 100% clear from this first chapter, this is very much Zesshi's story. We only had a reduced number of POVs from her due to her being a bit too young during half the act. That will change in future acts, she will be the main POV most of the time.

Faine was a riddle to write, probably the hardest character for me to figure out on how to portray. Honestly, I had to juggle between her hateful self and avoid "victim-blaming" seeing her circumstances. If I had to give my honest opinion, I think Satoru should have separated the two completely, as it was not healthy for them to be around each other. But hey, victims with trauma can turn into their own abusers if not handled well. And Satoru is not exactly the most adapt person at recognizing that, seeing how socially inept he is. And his bias with his own relationship with his mother is certainly a factor.

Speaking of Satoru, bro is making life hard for the NW without even realizing. Good luck to Re-Estize and Baharuth trying to beef it with a literal nest of legendary undead in between them... actually, maybe separating those two is a good thing in hindsight.

Slane is certainly the one getting screwed here, not only losing one of the bloodlines of their gods, but also continuing to lose power trying to subdue hordes of legendary undead which Satoru can basically spawn infinitely.

Draconic Kingdom might end up better than in canon if it plays its cards right.

But alas, I am eager to read your comments / reviews!

Thanks again to the funders of this first act!

If you wish to fund act II just contact me!

Act II: Absolute Death (20k words) is up next, in which we shall observe how Zesshi eventually comes to terms with the world she was born into!

Till next time! Stay safe!