

## ~ Day 50 ~

Cradling Mika's limp form in my embrace, I just sat there on the cold stone floor for a long silent moment. My heart was heavy, Mika's death was the first true defeat that I've ever felt. But as my mind wandered, sorrow was quickly replaced with a deep hatred that rooted itself in my very soul.

*The Mistress was going to pay for this...*

Laying Mika on the floor, I with one quick but gentle motion, cut an incision in his chest. With practiced ease, my claws slipped into the small incision. And when I retracted my hand, out came a faceted core pinched between my clawed index-finger and thumb.

The beautiful core shone a soft dark-purple glow that I could even see in the usually monochromatic visage of my mental sense, and the glow even seemed to have a tantalizing air. But I was pulled from the admiration of the glowing gem when a prompt invaded my vision.

[Mature - Lesser Shadow Core]

[Compatibility - **High**]

[Compatibility meets requirements for fusion, do you want to fuse the  
**Lesser Shadow Core** with you assimilated core?]

[Yes/No]

Reading the prompt, I was quite surprised by its contents. I knew from all the way back when I had found the five crimson cores at my current core's place of origin that I could 'consume' them into my assimilated core. I guessed that it would simply improve my core, although I wasn't entirely sure.

However, this time around I'm given the option of 'fusing' this core with my assimilated core. I hadn't thought it was possible to do so since the two cores were of two different affinities. Also, the fact that I have high compatibility with this **Lesser Shadow Core** had to be due to my newly acquired **Shadow Constitution**.

I couldn't be sure if this was a wise choice, but something told me that I should do it. So without further contemplation, I agreed to the prompt. Immediately, the faceted core that I had been holding in my palm began to dissolve. But instead of liquefying as the **Lesser Crimson Core** had when I originally assimilated with it, the **Lesser Shadow Core** slowly dissolved into concentrated shadows that seeped into my hand.

Tendrils of shadowy darkness ran down my arm, but also different from the **Crimson Core's** warm and blissful energy, the **Shadow Core's** energy felt cold and damp. At first, everything went smoothly, but the further the **Shadow Core's** tendril invaded my body, the more the **Crimson Core** within me began acting up.

It simply started with the two energies tentatively touching each other, almost as if testing one another, but it quickly turned violent and the two started fighting. I could feel pain from the two cores clashing, but pain had become something utterly inconsequential to me at this point, so my mind was only worriedly observing as it unfolded, not entirely sure if it was going to turn bad for me or not.

Before whatever was happening could turn worse, another energy suddenly seeped out of the **Lesser Shadow Core's** half-dissolved body. I couldn't immediately recognize what this third-party was, but it was obvious to my keen senses that it was not an energy of the **Shadow Core** itself. When the energy reached the two warring cores my eyes widened as they both almost instantaneously calmed down.

Followed by that, the fusion went completely smooth as the two energies of both the **Crimson** and **Shadow Core** intertwined with each other. Inspecting that unknown and curious third energy closely with my mental sense, I suddenly got a familiar feeling that wholly stupefied me.

*Mika?*

But before I even managed to regain my bearing, the feeling disappeared, and with it, the energy.

[Congratulations! The **Mature - Lesser Shadow Core** has successfully fused with your assimilated core!]

[**Lesser Crimson Shadow Core** has been acquired!]

[Skill - **Shadow Magic**, has been added to the skill list]

[Trait - **Crimson Mana Veins** has transformed into **Crimson Shadow Mana Veins**]

Inspecting my body, I saw that my before blood-red core had now turned into a ball of swirling viscous crimson and purple-tinged black shadows. Their magical glow the only break in the monochromatic world that I had found myself in as I no longer had the use of my eyes.

Abruptly getting to my feet, I walked over to the dead gremlin impaled on his own beloved instrument of torture, and with one ruthless motion ripped it from his body by its shaft.

I spared only Mika's body one last glance before I left the room and disappeared out into the corridor. Although I wanted to give Mika a proper burial, I didn't have the time, as vengeance was to be had.

By now, the tremors of battle that had shaken the entire dungeons beneath the Mistress' castle had already stopped. As I stepped out of long corridors and tunnels of the subterranean structure, I immediately let my mental sense flutter out in all directions.

While the detailed visage that my mental sense gave me of my immediate surrounding didn't extend too far, the full range of my presence and at which I could sense other living beings was far greater. So as soon as my sense encompassed most of the Mistress' castle, I was shocked by what I found.

I could already see that a lot of the surroundings had taken damage, and destruction was widespread with corpses of orc guards and servants laying strewn about. But when my sense found a single and all too familiar presence within the castle, I feral grin contorted my marred and horrifying face.

One single waning presence could be found throughout the whole castle and its surroundings, and it was the unmistakable aura of the Mistress. Her presence was so weak and faded that it was obvious that she was barely holding on.

Although the intangible balls of fire that had swirled within my eyes sockets had already disappeared, they almost reappeared as I walked through the courtyard and towards the castle with a smile that had turned completely sinister.

I had not intended to enact my vengeance already as I knew my limits, but this new revelation had presented me with an opportunity I simply could not pass down. Besides, the burning rage and hatred within me had almost turned to a fever-pitch, causing me to lose a great deal of rationality.

Walking through the ruined halls of the Mistress' castle, stepping over rubble and the mutilated corpses, I soon found myself in a spacious hall. The hall showed great destruction, the sign of battle evident everywhere. But one thing stood out amongst the ruination; the large and bloodied woman laying on the steps of an altar of sorts, placed in the middle of the hall.

### *The Mistress.*

If her presence wasn't enough to tell you that she was on the brink of death, then the sight of her should be more than sufficient. She was bloodied and beaten, strips of hair singed off, wounds riddling her body, and one particular dangerous-looking black dagger that stuck out from her gut.

To say that she was in a sorry state was an understatement, however, she definitely hadn't gone down without a fight as seven other corpses littered the surrounding in various states of dismemberment and pieces. It wasn't hard to guess that these corpses were of the seven other warlords.

But all of this barely really registered to me as my mental sense was completely focused on the pitiful form of the Mistress. Knowing that she was in no state to do anything, I didn't fear her blocking my **Appraisal** and used it.

-Appraisal!-

Appraisal - Asial					
Information		Attributes		Traits, Titles, and Skills	
-Name-	"Asial"	STR	32	Skills	???
-Race-	Lesser Daemoni	VIT	???	Traits	???
-Sex-	Female	AGI	???	Titles	???
-Rank-	D+	DEX	???	Resistances	
-Level-	25/50	INT	???		
Health	85/1122	CHR	???	Physical Resistance	???
Stamina	221/530	WILL	???	Magical Resistance	???
Mana	5/736	MAG	???	Mental Resistance	???

Looking at her status, if not for me not currently having eyes, they would've widened in shock at the crazy huge mana pool that this vile woman possessed. Something else that I noticed was her name. She was called Warlord Umbra by everybody except for those in her employ who called her Mistress, but I was confused as to why she had hidden her real name.

I didn't dwell on it for more than a moment though, as I clutched the bloodied magical branding iron in my hand and took determined steps towards the Mistress.

The sound of my footsteps finally alerted the Mistress, or rather Asial, to my approach. When she saw that it was me, obvious hatred could be seen warring with insanity in her eyes, but it didn't escape my notice the barely hidden fear also in there.

"H-how did you get free!?" - Asial

"No! S-stop right there! Sto- I will crush you with my m-m-magic, you insect! NO ARGH-" - Asial

Her threats didn't faze me in the slightest, and when I got before her, I kicked ferociously in the jaw causing a spray of blood to fly out. In the same motion, I also suddenly thrust with my the branding iron down into her shoulder, tearing flesh and embedding it so deep it hit bone.

[Lesser Daemoni has taken 12 damage!]

She shrieked and quickly motioned to grab out at me with what little strength she had left in her arms. But before she reached me, I activated the branding iron.

An unearthly scream tore from the bitch's mouth but the sound only made a satisfying grin find its way onto my face.

"Oh-ho-ho... you can't even realize how long I've been waiting for this, you fucking whore." - Me

By now, her throat had already run out of sound, now just contorting her body and face in a silent scream of agony. Lowering myself next to her head, I whispered into her ear.

"For all you've done to me, for all you've done to Mika, I will show you real torment." - Me

Suddenly a pondering expression appeared on my face just before getting replaced by a malicious smile that almost reached from ear to ear.

"I suppose, *this* what you'd call 'an eye for an eye'." - Me

While the Mistress was submerged in agony from the still embedded and flaring branding iron, she could still hear my words, and when she realized what I meant an even greater terror took hold of both her body and mind.

She was completely incapacitated with not only the wounds and exhaustion that her body was in but the branding iron also made it completely impossible for her to move or resist.

Her body was much larger than me, so when I positioned myself on her chest, cradling her head between my thighs, I stared directly into her panic and pain-filled eyes.

Emotions of madness, pain, agony, horror, fear, and hatred could all be gleaned in her large and beautiful eyes. Caressing her cheeks gently with my one remaining arm, I smiled condescendingly at her.

"I-In... In-sect." - Asial

She could barely get the word out, but my smile only turned more feral upon hearing it.

"Tsk, tsk. Such shame... but you get what you fucking deserve." - Me

As I said that, I reached up with my claws and slowly closed in on her eye...