



The
ABANDONED
VILLAINNESS
Became a
Zombie

Original Author DODO



The
**ABANDONED
VILLAINESS**
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Zombie

ORIGINAL STORY BY
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ADAPTED BY
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**NOVEL
PRESS**









CHAPTER 1





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CHAPTER 1

THE BEGINNING

“**K**yaaa!”

The moment I regained consciousness, a sharp scream echoed through the air. My legs tangled, and I hit the ground with a painful thud.

“What are you doing, Penelope!” The man pulling me by the wrist cursed as he yanked me upright.

Penelope?

As soon as I heard that name, a torrent of foreign memories—someone else’s life, someone else’s thoughts—poured into my mind all at once.

Penelope Lloyd.

The notorious villainess of the novel *In Search of Paradise*. A troublemaker even in a zombie apocalypse.

Once the shock settled, the truth became painfully clear: this was the world inside the novel, and I had become *that* Penelope.

And thanks to her earlier tantrum, we were now sprinting through the forest with a horde of zombies howling after us.

The moment I accepted that dreadful truth—

“Can’t you even run properly?” The Crown prince growled, hauling me up with impatient strength.

His anger didn’t matter. What mattered was that he was still holding my hand.

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Then the metallic rot of blood brushed my nose. I glanced back. A swarm of zombies came tearing through the trees, their clothes torn, their limbs flailing at unnatural angles, their eyes glazed, and their veins swollen beneath pallid skin.

Afraid he might abandon me out of annoyance, I ignored the sharp pain in my ankle and hurried after him.

We were running toward a fortress atop the mountain. Its outer wall was solid with thick gates, and the watchtower rose high above the trees, perfect for spotting danger before it hit. Inside, the inner yard held an armory and supplies. The ideal refuge with food and weapons.

“Lillia, take my hand!”

The Crown prince leapt onto a massive boulder with ease and reached for Lillia Sweedie, the heroine of the story.

But Lillia’s feet slipped, unable to find proper footing. I hurried behind her and pushed her upward as the zombies closed in.

“Aah!”

In her frenzy to catch the prince’s hand, Lillia shoved me backward. I lost balance. She nearly fell with me, until the prince grabbed her slender wrist.

Kiieek!

He swept Lillia safely into his arms. He looked down at me lying on the ground for a brief second... then turned away without hesitation, as if I were already a lost cause.

“Wait—! Please!”

Yes, Penelope had been awful. Always picking fights, causing trouble, endangering everyone. But leaving her behind to die?

This was still too cruel.

I scrambled up, fighting for breath, clawing at the boulder’s rough surface. But cold fingers suddenly clamped around my ankle. A zombie had grabbed me.

At that instant, a line from the original novel flashed through my

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mind:

Zombies closed in behind Lillia, who had stumbled because of Penelope. It was too late to save her. Yet his body instinctively moved to save Lillia anyway.

...That heartless bastard!

Driven by raw panic, I twisted away and hurled myself down the slope, rolling violently.

Crack!

Pain shot through my thigh. A zombie had managed to bite me. But at least I hadn't been devoured. Anyone who had ever been bitten would know how lucky that was.

"Ghh—!"

With trembling hands, I seized a rock and smashed it down onto the zombie's skull still latched onto my leg.

Thud. Thwack. Crack.

Whether from the pain of its fangs in my flesh or the terror that everything was truly ending, I sobbed like a maniac.

"Hh... hhuuk..."

When the head finally caved and my tears ran dry, a pointless regret seeped in.

I should've grabbed the prince's hand first.

...Once I became a zombie, would I lose my mind and wander endlessly? Could that even be called living?

Then... was I dying?

The word *death*, once distant, now pressed against my chest with overwhelming fear.

I don't want to die...

That was my last thought. Darkness followed.

Eventually—

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“—Khgh!”

My body convulsed. My eyes opened. I had become a zombie.

“A... ah... this...”

My words slurred. My limbs felt stiff, But my thoughts were still clear.

Maybe it was some strange perk of transmigration. I didn't care. What mattered was that I was still conscious.

“I... I'm alive...”

Relief washed over me... until a faint rustling sounded right beside the tree I leaned on.

I nearly froze. After surviving once, I refused to die again. I pushed off the tree, trying to flee. But something burst through the bush first.

Bloated veins bulged under paper-thin skin. Its breath rattled like broken glass.

A zombie. As expected.

“Grrraah...”

It sniffed the air, head turning toward me.

Thump... thump... thump...

I snatched up a stone. If it lunged, I'd crush its skull again. But the zombie tilted its head... and wandered away, uninterested.

Oh. Right. I was a zombie now.

Zombies reacted only to human scent. The smell of living flesh and blood. And I no longer smelled human. My frantic heartbeat slowed. Then I noticed something strange.

Wait... zombies' hearts don't beat.

I pressed a hand to my chest. There it was. A sluggish but real pulse. Zombie bodily functions were degraded, nearly dormant, unless they caught the scent of blood. That triggered an “awakening” that restored human-like agility and even enhanced it.

But this wasn't the time to think about that. It was a problem for another time.

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What I needed now was shelter. Zombies weren't immortal. Crush the head and they stopped moving. But this forest was full of beasts. Wild predators didn't discriminate between humans and zombies.

While the sun was still bright, I had to find a safe place.

I want to live. The thought wouldn't stop repeating. The bite's agony... The suffocating choke of death... Just imagining it made my hands tremble.

I don't want to feel that again. I need to survive.

How or why I became Penelope didn't matter. I simply refused to experience that pain again. To avoid wild beasts, I needed a building. A shelter. But there was only one nearby: the fortress the protagonist party was heading toward.

If I can just get there...

Traveling with the protagonists wouldn't be bad. Eventually, once the emperor stabilized the zombie crisis, they would descend the mountain. With the Crown prince and Grand Duke at my side, I'd at least be safe from animals—

But would they protect me?

The image of the prince turning his cold back on me made the answer painfully clear. Still, the fortress was the only viable refuge.

As long as they don't realize I'm a zombie.

But one look at my exposed arm, veins grotesquely swollen under torn sleeves, made that difficult.

How do I hide this? There's only so much clothing can cover...

Then it struck me. A shockingly perfect idea.

A way to join the protagonists without suspicion.

More than enough to fool them.

