

“Time to head back to your rooms!” Jack calls. “We’ll do this just like we did last night, and like we’ll be doing tomorrow night!” Well nothing to do but wait now, as you return to your room. It seems Jack has another ad read though. “Today’s fights are sponsored by: Palmeiser! Watching at a sports bar? Order up a round! Be sure to drink responsibly, and don’t drink before heading home, after all fatalities are meant to be kept in here!”

Some time after that ad, the door unlocks, and you face the empty common room. There are lights above the three doors on the south side of the room, identifying each. The doors you entered from on the North Side had no lights illuminating them, and ropes in front of them, making clear where you need to go. You step forward, and make your choice, before the door opens and you climb up a dimly lit stairwell to the fourth floor.

You step into **The Still**, and the hot humid air immediately slaps you in the face. The whirring and humming of loud machinery follows in a 1-2 punch disorienting you.

This massive distillery resembles a factory more than a skyscraper room, as you trek across stained concrete floors amid rows of oaken barrels. As giant copper machines churn their liquids, you navigate around these massive structures to explore more of the room, stepping over plenty of haphazard benches and crates. Craning your neck back, you even see a network of steel catwalks above you, but no windows. This room is its own enclosure from the world.

You put on your Scouter. You feel like you won’t get a read until the end of the night, but it’s enough. After all, at least one of them is weak enough. Now, time to get down to business. Even now, on the edge of life and death, you’ve devoted yourself to hunting down that monster. This room, you smell his stench above the alcohol. Castle is here.

There will be time for items later. That vampire needs to die. Your one and only mission is making sure of that. You stride through the room as fast as your legs can carry your badly injured body, looking for him. The catwalk, that’s it, that will give you the best vantage point. Finding the stairs in the room’s corner, you climb up.

It does give you a vantage point, but you don’t have to look down to find the vampire, just across. It seems Castle Cabra had the same idea as you, and now stands before you in all his glory. You both lock eyes.

You crack your knuckles and stretch your neck each side. “Time for the last round,” you call to Castle.

With a dramatic step back, Castle once again reaches into his cape and withdraws his cane sword, once again twisting off the rod as the blade reflects a light beam with a gleam. Shit, you

should have rushed him down before he could draw his weapon, if only you weren't so tired. Whatever. He's going down anyways.

"Come on now, I'm unarmed," you say, bouncing on the balls of your feet.

"It matters not if you are brave. It's time to put you in a grave," he responds. His face is grim. Just like last night, Castle assumes a fencer's stance, advancing sword-first towards you.

One of you has to make the first strike, and you have the intention of it being you. You hunker down into a boxer's stance, keeping your arms in front of you, realizing that no matter what you do, you will be stabbed. The best you can do is keep him from hitting your head and chest. Stance assumed, you charge the dueling vampire, willing to take the brunt of his steel.

Eyebrows raised, Castle seems surprised that you would make such a self-sacrificing play, momentarily caught off-guard. You manage to throw the first flurry of punches, forcing Castle to quickly prance backwards, stabbing at you as he goes. You feel the *schlink* of steel piercing your forearms, and as you swing he keeps moving backwards out of range. His stab wounds are unable to fully cut through your meaty arms, but they certainly hurt. Things can't continue like this.

Looking for your chance to strike as Castle dodges swing after swing, you grit your teeth in preparation for the hit you'll have to endure. You make a wide feint, leaving your side and midsection wide open, one which Castle notices and aims straight for. He falls for it!

Whipping around, you at least take the deep stab into your shoulder. More importantly, you land a massive hook into Castle's hand gripping his sword! Your impact knocks the weapon out of his shocked grip, and it clatters over the catwalk edge, falling far below to the ground.

You refuse to let up the pressure, as Castle looks at you in surprise, a look soon to be broken by your fists. One, two, one, two! Left, right, left, right! A jab to his face, a thrust to his gut. Whizzing like pistons, each hit lands with a satisfying crunch or whump, staggering the vampire backwards. Castle's face is splattered with both your blood from his stab wounds, and now with his own. You combo your blows, another, another, another. You're sure you've knocked loose some teeth, certainly bloodied his nose, gave a black eye.

Suddenly, **POW**.

You're dazed. A blow to your jaw from below. Swinging up from beneath you, the fake cane sheath for his sword. Castle managed to string enough willpower together while being beaten to crack you across the jaw with it.

Reeling, you stagger away from him as he fumbles backwards. You fall to one knee, while Castle leans against the guardrail of the catwalk. You see him leaking blood from his mouth – he quickly licks his lips and swallows, before turning to you.

You shake off the stars in your vision, panting. “We aren’t done.” You’ve got your enemy right where you want him.

“I fear we are. You have... come far.”

What? Instead of sticking around Castle vaults over the catwalk. His cape flutters behind him, and he floats gently down instead of falling like one ought to. That monster... he’s... running away? From you? No. No, he can’t! You get back up to your feet, trying to track his direction as you see his cloak receding into the gloom. You stagger, feeling the blood loss from the tens of cuts littering your forearms.

[No. It can’t end like this.](#)

You feel a surge of strength within you. It isn’t your natural second wind, or your vampiric power, but magical aid from somewhere else. Did Arthur come through for you like he said he would, or is it someone else? It doesn’t matter to you. You breathe in, your chest filling with air:

“WE AREN’T DONE YET!”

You look for the nearest still to the catwalk, and jump over the guardrail onto its cone-like roof. *Whump*. Your heavy weight almost breaks it, but it lets you slide down, making your fall shorter. The landing hurts your ankles as you land, but not as much as a fall straight from the catwalk would.

You run, you run as fast as your legs will carry you into the darkness, to the darkest darkness, the pitch-black cape of Castle Cabra. He whirls, surprised to see you pursuing him. You’re not going to let him get away. “Hiding like a scared animal,” you growl. You’re stronger still. You knew it last night. You know it now.

Castle growls. “Stay down. Muscled clown.” He opens his cape, and again familiars fly out of it, but not as many as last time. You know how these work. You can see their flights. You snatch them out of the air, crushing their bodies one by one as Castle continues to retreat towards a batch of full barrels.

The bats are no match for you, only managing to delay you for a moment as you finish them off. Castle’s cracking open a barrel of some alcohol or other, and with a heave he hurls it flying at you! Rearing back, you rocket a punch to meet it head-on, and the barrel practically explodes. The high-proof drink drenches your cuts on your arms, as well as your not-fully-healed wounds from yesterday. It all burns and stings in pain, and you let out a gasp as Castle capitalizes to dash at you once more, his cane sheath leveled at your chest. Is he trying to stake you with a blunt piece of wood!?

You raise your palms to your chest, blocking the hit, knocked down to the ground as the tall man concentrates his full body weight on that point. Still, it doesn't pierce through.

Even as the tall man straddles you, you can feel his strength waning, unable to apply the needed pressure through your newfound strength. "So, bloodsucker," you grit your teeth. "Are you ready to crumble to dust?" Arms straining, you slowly push the man upwards, off you, away from you.

Castle leaps into the air in retreat, running towards a wall. You quickly rise to your feet as he bounces towards it, his feet sticking to it at a 90 degree angle. Defying gravity, he runs up.

"No more tricks!" you shout, racing after him before leaping up and grabbing his cape just as he's about to get out of reach.

A thousand eyes materialize on his cape. You freeze, as suddenly All looking at you, and you hear their command to *STOP*. Yeah... That seems like a good idea...

No!

You yank down, jerking Castle by the neck. He tumbles to the ground, but the cape's eyes gaze at you, sending a hundred commands, and you hear their orders all rattling around in your mind. Stop. Run. Halt. Kneel. Fall.

No more.

RRRRRRRIIIIIIP

The vampire's cape is torn in two, the cape letting out a shriek as it dies, its eyes fading, now nothing but a piece of cloth. You stand with arms extended, one half released from each hand, and the cloth flutters to the ground.

CRAK

Enraged, Castle slams his cane against the side of your head. It hurts, drawing blood, unfocusing your vision. But you won't be stopped.

"How many people did you kill with that cloak on?" You don't wait for an answer. You drill the vampire in the stomach. "How many families have lost someone because you were thirsty?" A jab to the face. You pin him against a wall. You roar: **"You will not take another!"**

With your left hand, you grab him by the throat, before rearing back with your right. Castle spits out "You are ze same—" whatever he was going to rhyme, you won't let him. Your fist smashes into his face, and you can hear the breaking of bones.

“NO, I AM NOT.” You rear back again, as Castle struggles in your grip. “TONIGHT, I AM NOT A MONSTER.” Another punch smashing his face. “TONIGHT, I AM A MAN.”

And another. And another. Castle’s face is unrecognizable. Another. Another. However many punches you throw, you know it isn’t enough to repay him for what you’re sure the ancient creature has done. Another. Another. Another!

Eventually, Castle stops struggling. Panting, exhausted, but still standing, you continue holding up his limp body by his throat.

You drop him. Castle’s body just lays there, its face nothing but a red mess. It doesn’t even quiver.

You bend down and pick up his cane, having fallen from its hands long ago, and you grasp its chilling smoothness. You stand it on the corpse’s chest, and with all the might you can muster you stomp the blunt end straight through his heart.

A last messy sputtering of blood from Castle’s corpse.

You stand there. Panting. A feeling overcomes you.

“RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!”

You roar at the ceiling, standing before your fallen foe. It’s primal, the sound of triumph. The roar of victory echoes throughout the room. You raise both your hands over your head, blood from your wounds trickling down upon you.

“WHO’S NEXT!? WHO WANTS TO FIGHT THE CHAMPION!?”

You call out to the room. There comes no answer.

That’s it. You’ve won. You’ve defeated that monster.

You make your way through the room, picking up whatever you can scrounge along the way. **Red String. A Fell Cleave. A \$10 bill.** None of it compares to your feeling of vanquishing that monster.

Wounded, you limp through the room, finding another door. Opening it, you make your way up another set of dimly lit stairs, into another room which looks very similar to yesterday’s. You are guided to your room by a guard, who closes and locks the door behind you.

Laying on your bed is a **Kill Token** and **\$7**. The spoils of victory.

Your Scouter reads: Castle – 0 HP. Lele – 6 HP. Saul – 6 HP.

For now, it is done. The monster is slain. You can sleep.