

## **A Ghost 101**

### Chapter 101

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Usually, when I sleep as a ghost, I don't dream. I can only feel the faint darkness seep into my mind as I am embraced by this cold and unforgiving obscurity. The nature of my very soul has changed greatly, and despite still having the ability to rest and calm my mind from its stress, I cannot possibly sleep the same way living beings can.

Of course, I can still rest and the next morning wake up energetically, but essentially, I cannot sleep normally, and therefore, dreams do not exist in my sleep.

I only feel as if I've fallen into complete silence and obscurity, although a part of my own self remains awake at all times, seeing and experiencing the world around me through the phantasmal capabilities of my very existence.

Being a ghost is rather interesting in many peculiar ways, which I had yet to delve into to its full extent. Despite this, I had realized many things by merely existing and developing my strength.

One of such things is the lack of dreams, as when I sleep, I only feel the darkness of my soul grow bigger and darker as if this endless abyss within me was... me.

I suppose I had become the abyss itself, and therefore, despite being embraced by the cold of obscurity, I do not feel uncomfortable.

Indeed, I have changed from my former self back on Earth, and probably I had also changed greatly from the Maria I used to be here.

I had become someone completely new through Existence Evolution and the absorption of Experience Points, boosting my own existence into greater heights of power.

But this continuous level up didn't only bring with me a significant enhancement to my capabilities, but I've also changed as a being. My soul changed in nature as I evolved. It got darker and more cursed as I continued down the path.

Now that I've reached almost the peak of the levels that a Pandora can reach, this darkness, this chaotic and spiraling obscurity within me, is awakening and growing larger and denser by the second. It is becoming me.

I do not fear being taken over by the darkness because, as edgy as this might sound, I have become the darkness. Therefore, I am immune to mental disruption attacks, and if someone were to dare to peek into my soul and mind, they might be the ones being affected by this deathly obscurity.

I don't know how much I am developing, but... I suppose this is for the best. Deep down, I desire to protect the little friends and allies I've made along the way since I've woken up as Maria, the ghost.

I still miss my world, my family, and all of that, but I've embraced this world, and I want to make the best out of it, despite how childish it might sound. I suppose I also had that desire back then, the desire to change my daily life and have an adventure, not simply be an NPC.

When you grow up, you realize that despite all the adventures you had reading comics, manga, books, seeing anime, cartoons, movies, and more, you're not really the protagonist, you're not really a hero having a journey either, you're just the farmer you see in the RPG, an NPC stuck as a farmer for life.

You're not bound for greatness, and you're not bound to do anything important either... I had realized I was a mere NPC back then, and despite that, I strived to have fun and enjoy life as it was, despite how hopeless my existence was.

Every time I sleep, I feel like my true self resurges from the dorky Maria that everyone knows. That self is also my true self, but this self... is also me. I don't have two selves, but simply put, I save these thoughts and emotions deep down to not seem unapproachable by others.

I suppose I did the same in my previous life. Alas, I died, crushed by books. The most pathetic way a person could ever die.

Now that I have so many friends and beloved people I want to protect, I must grow stronger and embrace this darkness within me even more. I must let my dark self grow more prominent and more monstrous. It is perhaps the only way that I can possibly survive the harshness of this world and finally be able to calm down this raging hatred inside of me.

As a ghost, I am cursed. The curse of a ghost is simple. To be a ghost, you must be cursed.

Souls don't naturally evolve into ghosts; they remain as souls through and through. Only through the corruption of negative thoughts and mana do they become cursed.

This curse, where did it originate? Well, from my own self. Souls that curse themselves and absorb corrupted mana become ghosts, and this is how I became a ghost myself.

My own hatred to who else than myself? I hate myself, or well, I hated myself.

I hated how hopeless and weak I was, how I died so pathetically in my previous life, only to die even more pathetically in this new life.

I don't remember the memories of Maria, but there's something I do remember of her... Her hatred.

This hatred is blooming deep down, wanting me to improve myself and become the best version I can possibly be of my own self.

I require power and more experience points to keep improving myself and grow to even higher degrees of existence. Only this way I can truly find happiness, peace, and freedom with strength.

I have also a growing hatred for those that did this to me and all my family, and my strongest desire is to slaughter them and eat their souls. It's the only way I can find some happiness and fulfillment in my wicked life.

But aside from that, I am also developing beautiful and loving feelings for those near me. They're like the cure to this darkness, and I suppose they're precious to me...

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## Chapter 102

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I looked upon the darkness of my own self as I saw my faint figure made of phantasmal white light.

Where was I?

A few seconds ago, I was delving within my own thoughts, but a second after, I found myself in a lake of darkness as the figure of a phantom.

How odd... what's going on?

I wandered across the darkness as I walked over the lake of obscure waters. I touched it with my glowing white hands as I felt a familiarity with this darkness.

Was I somewhere within my very soul? An unexplored area of the own fabric that makes me a being?

Unlike other Undead or living beings, ghosts are just souls. My entire being is merely just the soul, there is nothing else to me other than being a soul, and therefore, it grows big and more complex, as if it were trying to become a body by itself.

Through this way of evolution, my soul is constantly evolving, and it has gained "layers" within its own obscurity where I can explore and find even more obscurity. There's nothing much more to see than that.

But why am I in such a deep layer? Has my consciousness fallen by accident into the deeper parts of my soul?

However, before I could ponder these questions any longer, a glowing white light emerged before me, revealing a strange book, a grimoire, maybe.

It emanated a holy halo of light, so strong it overwhelmed my own sight.

“Who are you?” I asked.

“I am the power of your soul, the System you’ve wished for,” It said.

“The System?” I asked.

“In this world, everyone has a Soul Book, and I, the System, am a personalized Soul Book, even greater than any of the others. I am the base of your power and also the one that judges if you must acquire more based on the energy you absorb,” It said.

“Wow...”

“Sorry to interrupt your sleep. It was not my intention. But I required to speak with you,”

“I didn’t even know you could speak and all. I thought you were just a part of my own power. But you showed yourself when I acquired Jobs despite being a monster, right?”

“Indeed. At that time, I absorbed the information gathered in the Job Crystal. Nonetheless, it would be fine to explain to you what I am... and well, there’s no better explanation than saying that I am part of your own soul and power. That’s all. Besides, as you evolve, I evolve too. Similar to your Unique Skills, they become stronger the more you evolve. I have acquired a greater consciousness after your Pandora evolution. But I’ve remained in silence as I did not want to get involved with your life nor bother you.”

“I see... You’re very considerate, System. Now tell me, what is the meaning behind this meeting?”

“I have called you here with the intention of presenting myself, as I’ve realized you require a guide to share thoughts you don’t want to share with others,”

“Eh? Is that all?”

“And more importantly, I’ve developed a series of new abilities such as Advanced Analysis, System A.I., Soul Grimoire, and Build Up,” Said the System.

“Abilities...”

“Indeed, after the Experience Points of the latest battle were digested, I’ve finally managed to utilize them to acquire the power required to acquire these Abilities. They can help you in your journey, as you seek the happiness you deserve, host,”

The System spoke with the voice of a young man, which was rather charming.

To be honest, it was quite refreshing to speak with someone that I didn’t have to be reserved with, but at the same time, I still felt quite surprised over it.

Nonetheless, I decided to accept this quickly, as I felt curious about the system’s abilities that were recently developed.

“I see. Can you give me a brief introduction to such abilities?”

“Yes. There is a power within everyone’s Soul Book, the power to gain Experience Points, Proficiency Points, and distribute them automatically into Stats, enhancing a person’s physical and magical strength. Through Proficiency Points, the ability to earn new Skills is acquired, and by accumulating more, such Proficiency Points can be distributed to the Skills and make them stronger, reinforcing a person’s power. However, thanks to my intervention, the Soul Book of yours had been successfully upgraded into a Soul Grimoire,”

“Soul... Grimoire? So what can it do?”

“Everything,”

“Eh?”

“A Soul Grimoire is the greater version of a Soul Book. It possesses an even greater capacity of Experience Points and Proficiency Points absorption, and it also includes a greater and freer way to distribute them, alongside bringing forth the ability to redistribute them as well. Of course, those that had already been spent cannot be taken away, but those that are yet to be used can be distributed freely,”

“You mean that I can earn Proficiency in casting Dark Magic, but I can use it to distribute it into a Sword Technique?”

“Precisely. There is also an ever-upgrading list of Skills that can be exchanged for Experience Points and then upgraded through levels by the use of Proficiency Points. Such points will be kept within my own Point Bank and based on your thoughts. They will be distributed to what you desire.”

“I see... this is very convenient... and it just came out of nowhere too,”

“I know how you might feel, but if I had not shown up, you could have completely missed this ability,”

“Hm, now that you talk about it, this Soul Book and Soul Grimoire... it feels like TPRG, don't they? It's as if every person's soul is a little Rule Book where they can only build their own characters,”

“Indeed, but your Soul Grimoire has surpassed the limits of your own self, and it has become a true Rule Book. In the sense that you can also influence those at your side, and to a point where you can combine the capabilities you've learned to bring forth new beings into existence,”

The System was overwhelming me with frightening news about my new capabilities, but deep down, I couldn't help but feel excited about the prospects of my own future.

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Chapter 103

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Before me, the System had emerged as I slept. It appeared as a large grimoire made of white light, shining brightly with a phantasmal aura. The system itself took this shape as it had merged with the concept of Soul Book, which was what everyone had within them.

Their soul book was pretty much their Status in an RPG, where everyone in this world can see their Stats, Level, EXP, Skills, and more internal things, but there are very few ways to actually see the Soul Book of another person. But thankfully, my Analysis function within the System helps me do this as if it were cheating in a way.

The System explained to me that it had acquired greater sentience and feeling of consciousness as it developed the System A.I. Ability within it. Using this ability, I gained the ability to develop a mind that would speak to me directly, and now that it spoke to me, it said it was going to stick with me from now on and emerge whenever I had a question.

I felt rather surprised. Did this mean I would get to have a handsome-sounding male voice speaking to me every time I have a doubt in my mind? I cannot wait for such a fantastic future.

Nonetheless, he also explained to me many things regarding the power of my soul and how the System merged with it.

The ability of the Soul Book had evolved into a Soul Grimoire, which was something that offered a greater ability to edit my capabilities and grow stronger towards a certain direction. It was like letting me choose which paths I wanted to take if not all of them.

But of course, it is not recommendable to simply walk through all paths possible. Min-maxing is a thing in this world, and since early-game, I've been min-maxing as a magician-type fighter, with powerful magic that can do all sorts of things, and also amazing stealth and movement abilities.

My defenses are feeble unless I use my defense-based magic spells, so I am weak physically. Now, I could actually enhance my defenses by beginning to gather Proficiency Points from doing all sorts of things, such as constantly using magic and swordsmanship and then distributing these points into things completely outside of the spectrum where I acquired them, in exchange for the original abilities where I got them in order for them to not grow stale.



It sounds complicated, but it's actually quite simple. I can gain Proficiency Points through different yet easy methods. The easiest is to gain proficiency from the Skills I use constantly. Like continuously swinging a blade will grant me proficiency points in the Blade Slash and other related Skills, and there is a chance to get a new Skill related to the ways I utilize a sword. This usually happens automatically, and there is not a way for anyone to control these points, but now, I can.

I can swing a sword for a month and then use these proficiency points to, instead, enhance a completely different skill. But this would, of course, leave the Sword-based Skills stale as I distribute the proficiency elsewhere, so there is some care required for this.

Proficiency Points can only be used to enhance the proficiency of Skills, all types of them, while Experience Points, which can be acquired by killing other living beings or doing job-related tasks such as using spirits, magic, and so on, will also give me minor points.

By using Experience Points, I can either level up and increase my overall stats through a predetermined race and job-based Stat growth or use them to acquire new Skills from the Skill List that had emerged.

There were not all the skills in the world here, and they appeared based on my previously accumulated proficiency and affinities. Meaning that I couldn't simply come out with Light Magic out of nowhere, but the System did say I could actually learn many things as if everything was somewhat connected.

Using Experience Points, I can either Level Up, learn new Skills, or... well, there's the Build Up Ability.

The Build Up Ability utilizes tons of Experience Points, but it lets me edit my own Stats and change them around. But as I said, it needs Experience Points, so it cannot be done leisurely as always changing them around would be broken.

There is also another function that comes from the Skills I have acquired, such as Fake Life, Summoning, and other things.

Also, the Build Up Ability extends to other beings. And as a Necromancer and Summoner, I can create my own Undead beings through the use of magic circles, incantations, materials, runes, and rituals. All of them combined together can help me summon unique undead using raw materials. Aside from the basic undead that just come out of corpses, these Undead have way more strength but need good materials to work properly and be strong.

There is also an extensive list of Undead I can create now, and it is no longer out of luck or whatever comes out.

Aside from the Netherworld Beasts, there is new Undead I can create. They even include the required materials and more. By spending Experience Points, I can summon them by having the materials at hand, and I could even use Experience Points to make up for some materials as well. Additionally, I can edit new Undead that I have yet to summon using Experience Points, too, min-maxing them into incredibly useful builds that are there for a single purpose.

Before, I could only make Undead that did very basic stuff like fighting or protecting. At most, scouting like Raven, but now, there's the possibility I could make Blacksmith Undeads, Alchemist Undeads, Guard Undeads, Undead Bone Colossals, Blazing Skulls, Ghouls, and even Dhampirs!

What?!

This feels more like a Strategy Game out of nowhere, and their power is amazing too. The Grimoire shows me their descriptions, level of power, and abilities, which I can flip around and change to min-max and create unique Undead builds.

Of course, this only extends towards newly created ones and not already made Undead. After it is summoned, I cannot edit it anymore, and I need a lot of materials to make them.

But this... it opens up lots of possibilities.

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Chapter 104

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Seeing all these new possibilities, I wanted to use them right away and do something amazing with them, but I lacked Proficiency Points and Experience Points as it was all automatically spent. But now that I was given this power, I asked the System to hoard half of the ones I earn, so the progress of my levels and so on will continue alongside my skill levels, while I still get some of both points to develop other things.

This way, I get a steady pace in exchange for slowing down my own progress by half... but I just have to put in double the effort though I can do it, no problem!

The System had also said something about enhancing my Allies with it. You see, it seems that the power of the Soul Grimoire can connect to other Soul Books. This way, I could register friends as Allied Units within my Grimoire. The same way any being I create is registered there.

“As you can see, the Grimoire has many pages. There is a section with Allied Units,” Explained the System.

I had woken up early this morning, and I was currently speaking with him.

A flashy grimoire of dark cover and strange phantasmal decorations on it emerged, emanating a strong dark aura. The white pages flipped around as it suddenly stopped in an area where there were small sockets, and in such sockets, cards were saved.

Each card was a created being that was registered as an Allied Unit.

I cannot directly change their stats nor Abilities, though, but what I can do with them is interesting. I can enhance the stats and abilities of a group of such cards by spending Experience Points, Proficiency Points, or a new “currency,” magic crystals. The higher the grade of such crystals, the greater the boost I can give to the Allied Unit Cards.

“These cards represent the beings you’ve created, but you can also register non-created friends into this category by acquiring their permission and directly touching their Soul Books. After that, a card representing them will emerge,” Said the System.

I looked at the cards and noticed that those of the Undead that “died” disappeared, obviously, but the Cards of those that remained alive were still here. The most important ones to me were Lucifer, Partner, Kuro, and Raven. These four Undead were part of the main group, and I had created all four of them.

They seemed to have colored cards depending on their types and Rank. It was just like TCG...

"System, tell me the truth, where did you get the inspiration for all of this?" I asked.

"The System shapes itself based on the user's memories and knowledge, shaping his power to fit what it seems to be more comfortable with. These Allied Unit Cards can be enhanced and also equipped into your Deck temporarily," Said the System.

"What?!"

"Calm down. You can equip them temporarily by spending Experience Points or Magic Crystals in tremendous quantities, depending on the equipped card's strength. When equipping a card, your stats raise accordingly to the equipped card's stat, which is around 20% of their total stats. They are then temporarily added to yours, and the unit itself merges into your body. The time you can keep up the process is also dependent on how many Experience Points and Magic Crystals you utilize," Said the System.

"Of course, not only are stats shared, but you can temporarily use certain abilities of this Card. Quite an easy explanation, isn't it? Additionally, you can spend Experience Points and Magic Crystals to enhance the growth speed of levels, stats, and skills. This way, your allies will level up faster, develop skills faster, and increase their stats faster. The bigger buffs are only temporal and not permanent, but these growth enhancements can become permanent,"

"Ooh... I see... It is barely understandable, but I suppose that my Allies can be used to a greater variety of things. I feel like I am playing Pokémon now," I muttered.

"Well, it would be a misunderstanding to call this System Function 'Pokémon,'" Said the System.

He was way too serious sometimes.

"I see, alright, thanks for your explanations. By the way, what happens if I take the cards outside the Grimoire?" I asked.

“They can either be destroyed by you so you can instantly kill these units, or you can recycle them, utilizing the entire unit and exchanging it back into Experience Points, but Magic Crystals won’t be created,” Explained the System once again.

“Wait, this means I could raise Undead and simply constantly convert them into EXP?” I asked.

“No, there’s a limit, you can’t abuse this method constantly unless the Undead you made used EXP too, but even then, you don’t get the same amount you utilized, only being around 20% of the original amount.”

“So that’s how it is... It seems that all of this has a lot of potential, but I cannot abuse it completely. I guess that makes it balanced, somehow,”

“It is far from balanced as you’re the only being with the Soul Grimoire in this world.”

“I see... Hmm, I already got some ideas on utilizing all of this power. Perhaps using them on my allies back in the Goblin Village, so I could build up a sizable army to defend the entire place... it would take some time, but maybe I could do it. System, can I build up buildings or something?” I asked.

“Certainly, there is not such an Ability, have I not made myself clear? However, if you can grow strong enough, the System might find a way to add such a feature,” Said the System.

“Okay, you don’t have to get so angry over it. I was just asking because there seem to be so many surprises out of nowhere... Maybe I got a bit greedy there,”

“Certainly, the host is very greedy.”

“You’re growing more and more sharp-tongued as we talk, aren’t you?” I asked.

“...”

The System fell silent, and I decided not to talk to him for a bit. Maybe he felt exhausted by giving me so many explanations.

After checking out the book, I decided to move back to the room and found Lucifer outside the room, looking over the window of the corridor.

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## Chapter 105

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After checking the abilities of my new Soul Grimoire, I wanted to check out for a bit. Probably to take in a bit of that cold breeze there is from the cold mornings of this town.

Last night we just massacred an evil scientist and his army of chimeras, yet the people all around here had absolutely no idea that such a thing had happened.

I didn't know what to think regarding this. Perhaps ignorance was bliss. It was better for the good people of this place to simply not know of the atrocities that had happened below their feet. Even if it should be widely known, it would only bring more troubles to the duchy as a whole.

I've seen and interacted with the people around here, and I can tell they're good people. We had even gone to have a delicious lunch outside and more, so we had our own fun in our own unique ways.

Nonetheless, I was growing a bit tired and concerned about our future. Now that there were these slaves pending for salvation, I had considered going back to the goblin village as sending them alone could be dangerous. Even if it delayed my "crusade" to slay the pigs involved in the death of my family and me... I felt like it was the right thing to do.

Using this village as our main area of rest also sounds fitting. Every main character always has a certain home area where they come back after traveling elsewhere after all! So I don't see what would be wrong with doing just that now.

But as I wandered outside, I found Lucifer awake, looking through the window of the corridor. The cold breeze bathed his handsome face as his long silvery-white hair waved around. I could also tell his sharp eyes were filled with exhaustion.

"Hey, how are you doing? Why are you awake this early?" I asked.

"Mary... I am fine. As an Undead, I don't really need to sleep and have greater necessities such as eating... Although to calm down my mind, meditation doesn't sound so bad, which I do while I sleep to calm down the stress," Explained Lucifer.

"I see, so that's how you do it. My sleep is not so different," I responded.

"Hmm... It seems that as Undead, our minds cannot possibly dream the same way living beings do it... quite depressing now that I think about it," Muttered Lucifer.

"Well, we also got our perks that mortals don't have... So what's on your lonely mind here?" I asked.

"A-Ah? I-I was just admiring the beauty of the morning..." Said Lucifer, though it was rather shyly.

"Just the beauty of the morning? You?" I asked skeptically.

"W-What's wrong with that? We might be Undead driven by negative emotions and resentment, but we all... used to be alive once. And those memories persist within our minds," Muttered Lucifer.

"Huh... I see. Do you have any good memories where you enjoyed such a morning?" I asked as I moved at his side and watched the sun slowly rise from the horizon, the cold breeze covering my face.

"...I do," He sighed.

I looked into his dark and phantasmal eyes and noticed there was a tiny glint of light within them. It was small and fading away quickly, but I think he recalled something precious for that small moment.

"Tell me more. I want to know more about you," I said.

"Eh?"

"Come on. You've been at my side for almost half a year by now... Am I not worthy of your trust yet? Aren't we friends?" I asked.

"Friends... Not really... Aren't we just servant and master? Do you really consider me your friend, Maria?" Asked Lucifer.

"Of course I do! A friend is a friend. A servant is a servant. Those things are different. When someone I raise from death sticks to me for months and months... then you're a friend already!" I said.

"Friend..."

Lucifer suddenly looked into his own pale hands. His eyes once more shone brightly for a split of a second.

"I used to have a good friend back then... Back then, when there was still hope, back then when we were still fighting. Do you know... how horrendously frustrating it is to realize you've been sleeping and imprisoned on your own power for thousands of years... only to wake up and find that everything you hold dear is... gone?" He asked.

"Lucifer..."

Lucifer suddenly looked at the ground sorrowfully.

"My real name is Lucifer Drakon Draknea. I was the first son of the Dragon King of the South. Our family of dragons lived in harmony with nature in the cold lands to the south of the continent... Despite our long-lived race, we were not immortal, and we still died at a certain age... Due to that, on his deathbed, my father, the former Demon King, gave me the task of making my own family before I was to regret it later, when I was to grow too old to make one," He said.



“ ... ”

“You see. Since that moment, at the age of 137, I was given the title of Dragon King, and I had to lead my people to prosperity... Despite that, we dragons were a peaceful civilization, we lived in the mountains, and we mostly napped and hunted. We were nothing more than a wild tribe. Although the Dragon King still held an important role in unifying us all into a clan, the Dragon Clan,” Explained Lucifer.

“The dragon clan....”

“When my father died, I did what I had to do and sought a wife and had children. My two other siblings did the same, so we could keep our bloodline ongoing. But of course, we couldn’t simply have children, and that was it. We had to raise them and teach them well. But it was right in those times when war broke out across the entire continent. The Demons and the Humans began to fight at long last, after many years of small conflicts... That’s where the Demon King one day came here, asking for the aid of the Dragon Clan...” Muttered Lucifer.

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## Chapter 106

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So Lucifer was, in fact, the Dragon King all along?! The Dragon given the title of the leader and king of all Dragons within the continent. He was the leader of the Dragon Clan of Midgard.

Apparently, he had children and a wife, too. At some point, the Demon King, however, came looking for help in his territory...

“The Demon King you always talk about, how was he?” I asked.

“He was an unsuspecting man, very strange indeed. Sometimes I simply couldn’t believe he had the title of Demon King. But I knew he had a good-hearted personality and that deep down, he only strived for peace,” He explained.

“What did he look like?” I asked.

“Haha, you would be surprised by how his actual appearance was. He was no intimidating figure, nor any kind of monstrous being. He was but a human-sized demon with white skin, black horns, a long and pointy tail. He was a very classic-looking demon with no apparent unique features aside from the plainness of his own appearance... But within him, he held a strong conviction and an even stronger power dwelling inside of his soul,” Said Lucifer.

“Power...?”

“The first time we met, there was conflict right away....” Sighed Lucifer.

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Back then, Lucifer lived within the mountainous regions of the Dragon Peaks, where he lived and governed his Dragon Clan in peace. The forests were bountiful, and there were always beasts and monsters to hunt for food. The mountains were large and held big caves. They could live comfortably there without issues.

He and the other dragons thought they had it for life. They would keep living peacefully and have good lives in this place, but the war that broke out made some of them nervous. Nonetheless, because they were so far away from civilization, they never considered that it would never affect them. And because they were so strong, there were very few things they could actually fear.

However, the Demon King one day showed up there, and conflict quickly broke out. He asked for the help of the Dragon Clan so he could defeat the Human Empire that was trying to take over his people. He was here merely to ask for help without giving anything in exchange to the dragons.

Obviously, this was incredibly selfish, and they disliked him right away. They fought the Demon King, and the dragons won, apparently fending him off of their territory.

“Never come back again!”

“If you come back, we won’t hold back anymore!”

“You’ll die by our hands!”

The Demon King was left alone. The dragons had not decided to help him despite the important task that was happening, and how he believed that even if they didn’t want to get involved, that war would naturally reach them and eventually force them to fight. If he could add them to the Demon Kingdom, then they could have a backup army and allies to ask for assistance, instead of simply being cornered by the humans and being killed one by one.

And that’s where Lucifer understood, as the Dragon King, that there was some truth in his words. He had gathered his dragons back then and asked them all what they believed, but because they were so obsessed with living in isolation only with their close family members, dragons were always against the idea of helping compete with strangers or outsiders.

“But if we don’t join this, the world itself will eventually force us to do so, and by that time... we’ll be hopelessly hunted down like beasts!” Shouted Lucifer.

“King, how could you even think about such a thing?”

“We dragons can fight back against whole armies,”

“You’re exaggerating. Don’t let the words of that Demon get through to you, King...”

Lucifer understood that he had to help the Demons win if he wanted to keep the peace of his clan. The relaxed life that they’ve been thoroughly enjoying.

Dragons were powerful, but there was always a bigger fish in a world where everyone could level up, gain skills, Jobs, and even evolve. That bigger fish on the human side was in the form of S-Rank Adventurers, superhumans with the power to take down Titans and Dragons, and even more, the

terrifying Heroes, powerful Unique Skill users summoned from another world through a special yet costly ritual.

He knew that humans had more than one means to kill them if they wanted. Lucifer had fought humans this strong before, back when he was younger, and explored the outskirts of the territory, as he was chased down and almost killed by an S-Rank Adventurer that wanted to harvest him as mere materials. If it wasn't because his father back then intervened and killed this human with his might, he would have gotten killed instead.

"Humans are stronger than you imagine! This is an opportunity to have an alliance with the Majin and finally become an official Nation... Isn't being recognized as a nation what Father always wanted? Living isolated lives will never lead us into progress!" Exclaimed Lucifer.

However, most of the dragons couldn't agree with him and flew away from his cave. On that day, only his family and close friends remained with him and his ideals. But he couldn't possibly involve his wife and two children in this, these three people were the three precious treasures he could never risk, and perhaps, they were the reason he was so resolved into fighting and winning.

"I will come back after this is over. Take good care of them, Drakonia,"

"Lucifer... I know you're doing this for us, but-"

"If I don't do it, then who will do it? I love you... Please, be safe,"

"Take care... and don't you dare die,"

"I won't,"

As he saw his two little children sleep on their nest, his dragon wife licked Lucifer's face and hugged him, and then, she saw him fly off into the skies, with his four close friends, the only allies he could bring with him, who were fighting for the same resolve.

That day, the Demon King's castle was suddenly visited by five enormous figures in the sky.

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## Chapter 107

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“Of course... It all ended when things took a turn for the worse. The Humans played dirty. In the end, when we were finally managing to pull through, one of their heroes, named the Dark Hero, came with the strategy of attacking our homelands, capturing our families, and blackmailing all of us,” Said Lucifer.

“...I heard you mention it,” I said.

“Yes. They captured the Demon King’s daughter and his wife and forced us to surrender in the end. Despite all the power we had, despite how far we managed to defend our territories... we ended up being played dirty like that. I suppose... we were foolish to even think humans would fight us head-on....” Sighed Lucifer.

“And what... happened after that?” I asked.

Lucifer looked at the sk. He could tell his mind was going through many emotions and thoughts, despite his calm and composed expression.

“It should be easy to guess...” He said, looking down.

They got killed? Ah... I don’t really want to remind him of all of that. It doesn’t seem fair. I don’t want to ask him... I would feel bad if I did.

“If the Kingdom of the Demon King no longer exists, it should be pretty clear... what they did to all of them, to him too... In the end, they all got slain—everyone... every child... everything. Maybe... we were acting too pridefully? Too selfish? We never attacked humans’ settlements. We merely defended our fortress and destroyed their armies, but humans never play well. They’re dirty little rats. I can’t see the point in attacking civilians... Weren’t soldiers supposed to fight other soldiers? Isn’t that how war is supposed to go? Why would soldiers raise their spears against innocent and weak people, impale their bodies with countless spears, and slice their heads off mercilessly?” Asked Lucifer.

“...”

“Hah... Hahaha... We lost because we were too stupid. We were all a bunch of imbeciles. We shouldn't have gotten involved; I should have stayed with my wife... with my... kids...”

Lucifer suddenly couldn't contain his sorrow anymore, as he covered his face and began to cry desperately. Such a strong and cold man, who always acts as if he is emotionless, as if he is only filled with wrath... to cry so desperately, so sorrowfully... it broke my heart.

“Lucifer...”

I slowly walked towards him as I hugged him. He looked at me with his eyes filled with tears.

“Hahh... They took everything from me... Everything... Ngh... It hurts... It hurts so much...!”

Lucifer suddenly rested his head over my shoulders as he hugged me tightly. His hands grasped behind my back as if he was trying to look for comfort. I felt like I was hugging a child that lost his way, that lost everything, and that had nowhere to go.

“Lucifer... Calm down. You're here now... We can do something for them... We can-”

“Even what we can do now... I-it won't change the past....” He sighed.

“That's... true,”

“It won't change the desperate agonizing cries of all my people. It won't change the sea of bloodshed... it won't change... all the things I saw... My children...! D-Do you know what they did to my children?!”  
Roared Lucifer.

He suddenly became all shaken. Recalling the past was painful.

“Calm down, Lucifer! Stop recalling that past! You can’t... simply live in the past!” I shouted.

“Hahh... I-It must be easy for you because you don’t remember when you were alive... right?” Asked Lucifer.

“Eh?”

“You don’t remember anything, so it’s obviously not painful. You don’t feel any connection to all that’s happened before... So it’s all the same for you, right?” He asked.

“...”

“How can you even understand this pain-”

SMACK!

“Ngh?!”

I moved my hands swiftly as I gave him a slap in the face.

“Even though I don’t recall my past, that doesn’t mean I don’t feel pain for what happened to the past Miranda. Even though I cannot remember her memories doesn’t mean I don’t feel pain or sorrow after all the things I learned that happened to her family... Lucifer, we are not competing for who has a more tragic past here, don’t be ridiculous... You idiot!” I shouted.

“...”

Lucifer looked down to the ground.

“...Sorry. I... I ended up doing things I shouldn’t have... S-Sometimes I get... these memories. My soul is unstable... my mind sometimes feels like it’s shattering into pieces. It’s hard... it’s painful... to be an Undead,” He muttered.

“I know. I am an Undead too... I know it feels painful... I know our souls are constantly being fueled by this... anger... by this sorrow... It’s... as if it were part of our very beings. I know it hurts a lot. I am sorry for... not being there for you if you really needed someone... You should simply call for me,” I said.

“M-Maria...”

“Come... Hug me,” I said.

“Ah...”

I hugged Lucifer again. I hugged him tightly. I rubbed my face on his shoulders. I couldn’t cry as I lacked eyes. But I still felt as sorrowful as if I could cry for him. He must have gone through horrendous things... I can tell.

“You’re not alone... You’ve got me right here, okay?” I asked.

I looked at him as I mustered a smile. My lips were trembling a bit.

“I... O-Okay...” He muttered, as his pale face suddenly grew as red as a tomato.

He looked quite cute.

“How do you feel now? Better? I can still keep hugging you until you feel better. There’s no rush,” I said.

“Thank you... I never thought I would find comfort in... someone like you,” He said.

“Huh? Are you belittling me or something?” I asked while raising an eyebrow.



“N-No! I didn’t mean it in that way! I am... sorry....” He quickly apologized.

“\*Sigh\*... I know it’s hard for you to get these emotions out of you, but... If you need a shoulder to rest your head on... and if you need someone to hold you up, I am here,” I said.

“T-Thank you... It means... a lot to me,” Said Lucifer, as he suddenly held my hand.

Our faces were suddenly oddly close to one another.

W-What’s going on?!

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Chapter 108

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Lucifer’s face got oddly handsome all of a sudden, and he held my hand tightly too. He was slowly approaching my own face as well. What is he exactly doing? Maybe he wants another hug?

“Hm?”

“Maria... I... I can’t help it,” he said.

He suddenly pushed me down, as we were sitting on the floor at the moment when he dropped to tears. His face got even closer to mine, even closer than it should have been.

His hands were trapping me. Both of them were over my shoulders, as his sorrowful face seemed suddenly taken over by a blazing passion.

Despite being an Undead he was quite warm, and his breath got closer to mine.

"L-Lucifer?" I asked.

"Maria... You were doing all of that on purpose... D-Didn't you?" He asked.

"Eh? I think you're misunderstanding something here...." I said.

"Always acting so close with me... So warm... I cannot... resist it anymore... Forgive me..."

Lucifer's lips suddenly got closer and closer to mine, and I couldn't escape as he had me trapped in place. I felt like my phantasmal heart was beating faster and faster. I swallowed saliva and felt my breath getting warmer. My lips seemed moister all of a sudden, and his own grew closer.

Wait, a second, is he going to kiss me? Agh! No, I am not ready! T-That's done after marriage, right?

"N-No!" I said as I turned into a phantom and flew away.

"Ah..."

Lucifer ended up kissing the floor.

"You're really a pervert! I was just trying to make you feel better, and you try to take advantage of me? I-I was just trying to make you feel better!" I shouted.

"Eh? I-I know! I just... t-this passion... Maria...!" Muttered Lucifer, suddenly approaching me.

"No, no, no! G-Get away from me! I am not giving you any hugs for a while! And go wash your teeth. Your breath stinks! Don't you realize you're like a zombie?" I asked.

"Oh... I... Well... I didn't think you would mind. You're a ghost." He said.

“Even as a ghost, I wash my phantasmal teeth!” I said.

“S-Sorry! I... I went a bit too far,” He apologized.

“You act way too coldly sometimes. How could I tell you were actually going to kiss me? I never thought you would ever try to do such a thing....” I said.

“I-Is that so...?” He sighed.

“And why were you going to kiss me?” I asked.

“I-I don’t know... I just felt like it. You were so close... So warm... So pretty... You were filling the empty void in my heart, and it felt good to be at your side,”

“Awww... R-Really?”

“Y-yeah...” He muttered.

A slight smile surged on his lips as he held my hand again.

“Agh! Y-You’re doing it again! I am not giving you a kiss! Now go to the bathroom!” I said as I rushed back to the room, leaving Lucifer on his own.

“\*Sigh\* ....”

I heard him sigh. I felt a bit bad, but this was very sudden! How can a fine lady like me deal with a handsome Dragon Zombie like him?! It felt weird! I’ve never had experiences in relationships. I don’t even know how you kiss other people. Do I need to learn? Practice with a pillow or something?

Wait, why am I even thinking about this? Now I have to consider Lucifer as a potential romantic interest! What's going on? Did this entire story suddenly turn into a mellow Romance-tagged story? No way...

Wait, hold on a second. I should simply stop thinking about this. Yes, let's be oblivious about it. But why do I feel so embarrassed, and I feel like my heart is beating so hard? I feel like emotions are coming out the depths of my soul, and thinking about kissing Lucifer makes me even more embarrassed.

Huh.

Alright, let's think about something else.

I looked down at the kids sleeping, and I decided to quickly wake them up. The morning had come, and the sun was strongly shining through the window. It was time to wake up and say hello to a new day.

"Hm? Ahh... Good morning, nee-sama," Said Takeshi.

"Good morning..." Yawned Laura.

"How did you two sleep? Good?" I asked.

"Yeah, it was a comfy sleep," Said Takeshi.

"It was not bad, but I've had better sleeps," Said Laura.

"Really?" I asked while raising an eyebrow.

"Master!"

Partner woke up and jumped out of bed. She quickly reached me and hugged me from behind.

“Good morning dear, how are you?” I asked.

“Filled with energy... I want... food!” She exclaimed.

“Alright then, let’s get you some food then, fufu,” I giggled.

“Goo’ mornin’ Fweehh... I am sleepy...” Yawned Emeraldine.

“Oh, even the elf is awake now! Alright, how about we have some tasty breakfast? I got a lot of food saved from the cafeteria, and it’s all fresh and warm- or cold, just like when we bought it! Let’s enjoy a feast,” I said.

“Yaaay!”

The kids quickly became happy.

I set up a table with some chairs and began putting sandwiches, cakes, coffee, some tea, and even ice cream. I wanted to forget about that dumb and handsome dragon by eating a lot.

“Where’s Lucifer, by the way?” Asked Emeraldine.

“Washing his teeth, most likely,” I said.

“Washing his teeth? Why?” Asked Emeraldine.

“I don’t know. Maybe he’s stinky?” Said Partner.

“Yeah, he’s very stinky,” I said.

“Who are you calling stinky?”

Lucifer entered the room with a towel around his neck. He had taken a warm bath just now, it seems.

“Look who’s back!” I said.

“Maria I... I would prefer we didn’t speak about what happened... between you and me for now,” Said Lucifer.

“A-Alright then... Don’t worry,” I said.

“Between you and her?!” Asked Emeraldine.

“M-Master! W-What happened between you and him?!” Asked Partner.

“Hm? Erm... Nothing, really!” I said.

“You perverted dragon! What did you do to Maria-sama?! You dared touch her body!?” Shouted Emeraldine.

“Eh?! I didn’t do anything! Calm down!” Cried Lucifer.

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## Chapter 109

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After solving the misunderstanding between Lucifer, Emeraldine, and Partner, we quickly continued our delicious breakfast. At some point, the Innkeeper brought us the breakfast they served here, but compared to the food we were eating, it was very little. Nonetheless, I still ate it all for myself.

After the delicious and tasty breakfast, we rested for a bit as we began to discuss what to do for now. I decided to completely forget what Lucifer had tried to do to me this morning, deciding to think about it as if he had just not been on his right mind. He also acted like it didn't happen, so I suppose we made an unspoken deal, not to mention it for the moment.

Nonetheless, the thought about him trying to do these types of things to me again makes me nervous. It's not like I think he'll violate me or something because he can't. I am a ghost, and he's kind of a gentleman, so I doubt he has such urges. But I do think he might try kissing me again one of these days... maybe I shouldn't try to be so close to him? Ugh, I am talking about it again... Well, better to forget it for now and assess the problems we are facing now.

"So what should we do now? There are a bunch of people waiting for us underground, and I feel the urge to accompany them back to the goblin village, our settlement," I suggested.

"Hm, if you really plan to make that place your settlement and base... then I suppose we should go back and bring them there... However, as the number of people grows, we'll need more security there. Building up strong walls and making better buildings would be a priority," Said Lucifer.

"Huh... I thought we could do this later on, but we really have to do it asap. We already had our little adventure. For now, we should go back, be done with all of this, and then resume the journey, I guess," I sighed.

"We spent a long time traveling around, so I doubt there was not a lot of time spent on this... Going back would be for the best so we can assess everything. I would also feel nervous if we left the goblins and everyone else there abandoned for too long. Maybe someone might try to pick up a fight with them again," Said Emeraldine.

"Yeah... But what about this place?" Asked Lucifer.

"We'll slay the pigs before leaving. Of course, we'll steal everything they got as well. We need a lot of money to buy stuff and get ourselves materials and food for our people," I said.

"Hm, indeed, you're right," Agreed Lucifer.

"Is this village nice?" Asked Takeshi.

"Yeah, there's a lot of nice people there, so you'll be welcomed with open arms," I said.

"I've never seen goblins before... aren't they monsters?" Asked Laura.

"No, goblins are Majin. They're a humble race of small, green-skinned people. Don't think of them lightly. They're hard workers as well." Said Lucifer.

"O-Oh, I see!" Said Laura.

"I have been thinking about moving the village whenever we reach it. Although the lake is very important for the water that the village drinks, it is dangerous to leave them so close to the duchy there... moving to a farther and more enclosed region would be ideal," I said.

"Indeed, a relocation would also be useful and good for the village. I agree with this," Said Lucifer.

"But where? There were mostly just grasslands... I wish there could be a big forest to hide the village inside. But all the forests around were small patches of woods," Said Emeraldine.

"Forest... Yeah, it will be hard to find a place that could naturally protect the village, but we'll do our best when we get there. For now, I'll go take care of the pigs. I am getting tired of waiting," I sighed.

"Let me go with you then," Said Lucifer.

"No, you're staying with the kids. Protect them here in my place," I said.

"Eh?! Well... fine," He sighed.

He was looking forward to slaughtering some humans, but my punishment was not letting him do so.



"I'll go! I'll go!"

Partner didn't let me go as she hugged my torso tightly, and her adorable face said everything. She wasn't going to let me go unless I accepted on bringing her with me.

"Fine..." I sighed.

"Can I go too? I want to help you out, Maria-sama." Said Emeraldine.

"Eh? Are you sure? You're... okay with killing people?" I asked.

"I have to get used to it... I want to get used to it. After what I've gone through, I've already lost a big part of my former humanity. Perhaps I am no longer a person, and I want to see how far I can go, so I can be of more utility for you, Maria-sama," Said Emeraldine.

"V-Very well then, but don't get so close to me...."

Emeraldine had gotten quite close to me.

"A-Ah! S-Sorry... Hehe..."

After that, I decided to bring the two girls with me while leaving Lucifer with the kids, alongside Kuro and Raven too, and a few other Undead. I am just being overprotective, but I wouldn't like to regret not having been overprotective...

Emeraldine and Partner hopped into my Shadows as I traveled through Shadow Sneak in the middle of the morning. The sun had yet to completely cover the sky so there was some fresh shadow behind the buildings to sneak through.

Flash! Flash! Flash!

Using my abilities, I easily sneaked around, sneaking behind most of the people without anyone noticing.

I never thought Ghosts would have such a good Stealth Build potential! With these skills, I can easily travel and sneak around wherever I want no problem!

Flash! Flash! Flash!

In an instant, we reached the manor of the duke of this place. We'll slay him first before the other two.

The Duke of this duchy is named Duke Roberto Albraun. While the other two pigs I want to slay to avenge my family are Edward Allfire, and Ernesto Watertide.

Duke Roberto Albraun is currently within his room, so it's the perfect time to attack...

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## Chapter 110

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We sneaked inside the large manor after discussing things out in the Inn. We were going to sneak inside, slay the guy, and get over it with ease.

We moved inside of the place easily by sneaking using Shadow Sneak. Through this ability I was able to easily ignore most obstacles and sneak anywhere there were shadows around. I jumped around between shadows as I went, although I found some obstacles in what seemed to be a Rune-infused door.

What is this?

With closer inspection, it told me it was some kind of special security system that they had in this world, where Runes and spells were placed over a door, and that way, people wouldn't be able to easily break it open. It worked even against me, but I had something that they don't.

I was a ghost.

So I just became a phantom and sneaked around, phasing through the walls and entering the entire building in a second. In an instant, I reached the interior and scanned the area using my senses, reaching upstairs and finding out there were two presences above. The second floor was where the Duke was, alongside someone else.

I couldn't appraise them from where I was, but I knew they weren't too much if they didn't emanate strong mana from within them.

I flew upstairs while coating myself in stealth-based abilities as I found a very mildly obese man with short gray hair and blue eyes writing papers over his table.

There wasn't any other second presence around, and when I scanned again, there wasn't anyone.

Huh? Did I just imagine it? No way...

I was pretty sure I sensed two presences.

Where's the other one?

I scanned the area again with my Mana, but nothing.

Weird.

I decided to just get done with this instead of worrying anymore, as I emerged behind the Duke, like a specter of shadows.

I couldn't help but smile deviously as my soul danced happily. The resentment inside of my very being was about to be fulfilled once more as another one of the pigs involved in this entire tragedy shall be slain for good.

I extended my arms around him and then...!

SLASH!

“Huh?”

I felt as if a flash of bright light pierced through my arms and sliced them both.

“What?!”

I quickly sneaked back into the ground, but a flash of bright light reached the floor and illuminated the entire place, my ability to use Shadow Sneak was instantly negated.

I felt utterly desperate in the situation that suddenly changed before me. I escaped the bright light, but this only burnt through my entire body. My very being was of darkness. Such holy and bright light made me painfully aware that I wasn't invincible even as a ghost.

This pain was terrible.

I constantly conjured Undead Heal on my own soul, regenerating the darkness that was being purified and then expanding a barrier of shadows around me. The bright light covered the walls, and I wasn't able to use my phantom form to escape either. If I tried, my body would be instantly purified, and I would die right there.

Being an undead has such a weakness.

The bright light before me receded some more, but it continued to enhance the walls around us.

“W-What's going on, Maria-sama?!” Asked Emeraldine.

“Master?!” Asked Partner.

“There was someone waiting for us right here,” I said.

I looked in front of me, and as I stood in the corner of the room, there was a single person—a man of almost two meters tall, with short blue hair and sharp yellow eyes.

“You’ve survived that? You’re indeed a strong Undead. I couldn’t believe that the one behind the death of Duke of Affnaria was an Undead, but I guess all the clues led to that,” Said the man.

He was wearing clothes that reminded me of some sort of priest. Even his golden staff shone brightly.

But... how did he know that I killed the Duke of Affnaria?

What has been going on lately? And how did they predict I would come after the Duke here?

I looked at the duke and noticed a barrier of holy light was protecting him; he was terrified, though.

“I-It was really a smart idea to use me as bait! It really just came here to slay me... Unbelievable, is this woman a ghost, Sir Elderlight?” The fat man asked.

“That’s right. This is a monster, a ghost of some kind. We assume that this ghost is most likely the soul of the fallen Witch of Misfortune, Maria... The same day after her graveyard was found destroyed and her corpse gone was the day the Duke died, and the trails of phantom and dark mana were left in the horrendously destroyed corpses. We had to connect some dots around, but our secret informants used their abilities to see through clues using evidence. After doing some more, we finally came to the conclusion that it might really be her....” Said the priest.

They knew everything about me!

The only way to get out of here was by destroying the walls, but if there was a way to do that, he could still easily dissipate me with his light. Shadow and Death easily get beaten by this powerful Holy Light! My options are very few... But it's not like I am without options...

But they already knew everything about me and even realized I was Maria converted into a ghost...

"Heh, I guess you've found me out. Indeed! I am Maria Fuentes Belles! The Witch of Misfortune!" I announced.

The priest squinted his eyes as he pointed his holy staff at me, while the Duke felt utterly terrified by my mere presence.

"You've come back from the dead to avenge your death and that of your family, haven't you? Don't worry, resentful soul, I shall purify in the name of all that is sacred!" He roared.

"Purify me? You're mistaken. You're already dead," I said.

"Hm?!"

Of course, that was just a bluff to surprise him and gain time.

"[Summon]!"

FLASH!

An army of a dozen of Undead suddenly emerged around me.

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