

A Ghost 221

Chapter 221

After Partner's sudden thirst triggered out of nowhere, we grew rather worried about her and the prospects of a future where she would be way too thirsty. We need to find a way for her to calm that thirst of hers if possible!

But how do we exactly do that?!

I don't know! Really, I don't know.

We can give her normal blood, right? Yeah, that works.

The blood of beasts seems to be able to satiate the thirst of Vampires...

However, the blood of humanoids is what truly satiates their lust for blood, and it is not something we can easily get across in these lands. You don't wander around seeking bandit blood and finding it so easily! It is a complicated search. It takes time and effort. It is nothing that can be easily done around here.

So it is obviously not possible for us to easily find her some nice food to eat up. Blood is a precious resource, and we had run out already. Maybe if we could find more scum of the world that nobody cares about, it would be easy prey for her bloody needs, but for now, beast blood should do.

I'll keep her close to me to snap her out of her daze whenever she is in one. I can't let my Partner go around desiring blood like an insane Thrall or something, after all.

But really, being with her in here and with everyone in this warm place really reminds me of my harsh beginnings... How I started as a ghost inside a graveyard, how I ended up hunting down Wisps to survive, and then how I raised Partner using Fake Life from my own skeleton.

In a way, the being that Partner had become could be said to look a lot like the original Dark Witch of Misfortune, the woman whose memories I have lost, and Partner doesn't seem to have regained any memories herself whatsoever...

I remembered her since she was a skeleton! My skeleton! And now... well, her skeleton is still inside of her, my skeleton, I mean... This is a bit confusing.

Back then, she couldn't speak and seemed to not understand much of what I was trying to tell her, but she had good intentions as my servant and protected me using her hard bony body, which later on evolved to have a metallic exterior.

Later on, she gained flesh and became something of a Ghoul, and then, she was strengthened once more, until now, when she became a powerful Vampireess.

I am still surprised about her changes myself. It is quite shocking indeed and quite amazing as well. I can't help but feel amazed by the changes she went through... It is not easy to see a skeleton suddenly regaining its flesh and internal organs out of the blue, right?

I don't know how many internal hardships she had to go through herself, but they were certainly quite a lot: the change in her body, her development of emotions, the creation of her soul as her original soul was just phantasmal mass, and more... It could be said she was recreated.

Considering all of this and more, I can tell she still has a hard time controlling her newly generated impulses, but she's doing a good job at trying her best. She had already acquired Sunlight Resistance as a Skill, so she was going to continue getting better and better over time. I know I can trust her.

So I will stay at her side and help her control her emotions and her nature, so she won't harm anyone she loves and regret it later.

Holding her tightly in my arms, she slept over my chest as everyone else cuddled together with us as well.

We snuggled together below the blankets, and I slept soundly after the potatoes and the coffee. Everyone else seemed to also be tired and slept with me as well.

...

Meanwhile, with another of my minds, I admired the skies with Lucifer as he flew over the skies silently while being ravaged by the cold winds of this icy-dominated area of the continent.

"Damn it, will we really make this place our home? It is so chilly I am going to freeze." I sighed.

"You're a ghost. You can't be frozen." Said Lucifer.

"Geez, can't really even joke with you. What gotten into you? Tell me already." I said.

"...Well, it is nothing too much. I am just emotionally motivated to come here. After all, it is where everything ended..." he said.

"I see... You have the faint hope for survivors?" I wondered.

"...You guessed it right. I want to get there and see if there is anyone that had survived. It would be nice to know and see... descendants of the people." He said.

"Hmm... I really hope so as well. It would be nice if we could find other types of Majin. You've told me about a few before. I think you once told me about a Necromancer Lady." I said.

"Ah, yes, the Death Magician... The Death Element is rare in this world. Those that wield it can bring forth death and do all sorts of things with them... it is a dangerous power." he said.

"Hm, well, not so rare, huh? We have already fought two guys that had it, both vampire lackeys." I said.

"Yes, those guys... Well, they were not the rarest, I guess. Perhaps there is a greater influx of Death Mages than before... I guess I wasn't so right." Said Lucifer.

“Well, they’re still rare if we were only three out of a million, right?” I asked.

“I guess we could put it in that way...” said Lucifer.

The two of us continued talking while looking into the clouded horizon.

“Hey, Lucifer, do you think your family could be alive? Anyone?” I asked.

“Hmm... Not likely...” he sighed.

“I see... That’s a pity....” I said.

“...Well, you and everyone else have filled this void a bit more. I wonder if I should consider you as my family.” He said.

Chapter 222

When I woke up with my main body, we had already reached the ruins. The sky wasn’t clear at all, and it was very much still pretty cloudy. The air was chilly, and there was snow falling from the sky.

I found out that Emeraldine, Partner, and the twins were with me, sleeping. I slowly moved away from them by turning into my ghostly phantasmal form as the ruins greeted me from the outside. The carriage had already ended up moving some time ago.

What made these ruins? Well, there were massive half-destroyed walls and ruins of houses inside, all of them made into many rows, going around a large castle where the Demon King used to live. There are also ruins around the walls, which seemed to be once used by farmers? I think so. And there is a small forest around the entire place.

Lucifer was sitting in front of us in his dragon form. His shiny bluish and black scales shone brightly below whatever sunlight came across the clouds atop the sky.

He looked into the distance with a bit of contempt.

“...”

“We are finally here. What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Nothing... It’s just... This brings me back some memories.” Said Lucifer.

“Oh, I see....” I said.

We both admired the ruins in the distance, alongside the small foggy forest surrounding it. I felt some critters wandering around there, but nothing too threatening.

There was a lot of snow over the floor, probably a whole meter above the ground... So that’s quite something.

“Yawn~ Uwah? Oh, we are here already?”

Partner woke up first as she walked out of the carriage and admired the beauty of the surroundings, although most of it was just an endless snowfield.

“Yep, we are here... It is not as pretty as I imagined, and the snow keeps falling, but this is where we’ll make our home... We have to make ourselves feel comfortable, right?” I asked.

“Yeah... There will be a lot of work to do. We’ll reconstruct this place, right?” wondered Partner.

“Well yeah, I do plan to do that,” I said.

And after that, the rest of the people walked out of the carriages, alongside the other people in the other caravans. Emeraldine and the twins were the first ones to reach us, and they were wearing fluffy clothes covering most of their bodies for the cold. Emeraldine looked a bit funny because she had massive breasts, so when she covered them with a lot of clothes, it looked as if her chest was just a gigantic lump... Hahaha!

“ ... ”

I am envious.

“Th-This place is very cold... I can't imagine we'll make this our home... Maybe we can use magic to warm it up somehow?” asked Emeraldine.

“What kind of magic can warm a place?” wondered Takeshi.

“I-I don't know, but something could do it!” said Emeraldine.

“Fire Magic, maybe... Or I could detonate little rocks that bring some heat.” Said Laura.

“Laura, I told you to not use your Unique Skills carelessly....” I said.

“I-I was just joking around...” she said with a mild smile.

Catarina, Silvio, and Francesco showed up at our side not long after. They seemed surprised about the surroundings, the snow. The entire place was chilly, but this entire place was okay for us, Undead!

Except for the Fire Ghost Duo. Those guys are made of flames. Even if phantasmal, their main element is heated, so in a cold place, they naturally grow weaker. I have thought that much like Partner learning the Sunlight Resistance Skill, they would eventually learn Cold Resistance or something, or well, that's my hope.

"This place... It is weakening us... Uuugh..." sighed Silvio.

"Ahh... So cold... I never thought I would miss having a body!" said Francesco.

"Haha, you two are getting smaller by the second!" laughed Catarina.

"Catarina, don't laugh at them! Aren't they technically like your siblings?" asked Emeraldine.

"I laugh to whoever I want! Nobody is ordering me around, elf." Said Catarina while groaning back at Emeraldine.

Emeraldine pouted angrily at her for always acting rude, but I petted her shoulders, and Emeraldine almost jumped out of surprise. She then looked at me while blushing.

I guess she's still being affected by what happened between the two. Even touching her causes some strange reactions in her body... We'll have to talk about this. She shouldn't make it so damn obvious...

"Emeraldine, calm down, leave her be. She's always like that. Just ignore her." I said.

"Geez... Okay..." she said, glaring angrily at Catarina and then walking to my side.

"Damn, you got this elf tamed." Said Catarina.

"I also have you tamed," I said.

"Guh... I guess..." sighed Catarina.

Technically speaking, she's MY undead, so she's a tamed monster of my own property, heh.

So she's even worse. She's like a dog.

Actually, that was way too rude... She's not like a dog.

"Catarina is a dork anyway. She's stupid." Said Partner.

"Ahahaha!" laughed Emeraldine at Partner's sudden remark without context.

"W-Who are you calling like that, you... fake vampire!" said Catarina.

"I drank your blood and became an actually Vampire while you're a zombie now! Hehe, who is the loser here?" asked Partner.

Damn, she's destroying her.

"Alright, Partner, calm down. You've already killed her enough...." I said.

"Aaagh! Give me back my blood!" cried Catarina.

She was actually rather affected by what Partner said. She knew very well that Partner drank her and the other two guy's blood on a daily basis until she ended up evolving into one in the end.

Perhaps there was some sort of requirement to evolve into a Vampire that Undead like her have to do before evolving into one, and perhaps actually just drinking their blood was one of such requirements.

Now that she had become a Vampiress, her talk and words were even more eloquent than before, and she really had that air of regality that Vampires had. She was even dignified and prideful, just like Vampires often are, and perhaps even arrogant, just like now...

Emeraldine didn't seem to mind her new personality.

Chapter 223

After Partner roasted Catarina alive, Emeraldine began to laugh at what Partner had said to her. The two fire ghosts seemed to also laugh a bit over the absurdity of the situation.

“Hahaha! Catarina, I can’t believe you’ve become quite the laughing stock.” Said Silvio.

“Oh my, don’t be so rude, or the bully will begin to cry...” said Francesco.

“Y-You two...! Do you dare join in her arrogant remarks?! Your blood was also drunk by her, idiots!” said Catarina.

The two fire ghosts shrugged without caring. They didn’t seem to have their bodies drained from all their blood. Partner enjoyed it greatly.

“We don’t really care.” Said Silvio.

“Yeah, it’s a thing of the past. You’re the only one so stuck in the past, Catarina! Just embrace this new life. We already reached our new home.” Said Francesco.

I began to slowly infuse Mana into the two fire ghosts while they spoke, so they gained their composure and began to glow brighter with a stronger heat. Through the use of Mana, they can fight against the coldness of the environment and probably grow a bit healthier... Well, as healthy as a dead spirit can get.

“Ugh, I don’t care! And what are those rumors I am a crybaby?” asked Catarina.

“Okay, Catarina, you seem to love building up dramas, but calm down for now, okay?” I sighed.

“*Sigh*...” Catarina waved her head as she ignored me and fell silent.

I guess she’s obedient.

Syllis and Bellerine had also joined on the sidelines, but because Catarina was making a ruckus, they never found a way to get into the conversation. Still, now they were finally able to greet us.

The two of them were very slim. Rabbit-kin lacked a lot of grease in their bodies, their muscles were also thin, and the only thing they could use to warm was their fur, but even that wasn’t all that much. They lacked a lot of fur like normal rabbits, and they mostly had around their feet, arms, chest, and a bit around their backs and neck.

So due to that, they were wearing very big clothes around their bodies to keep themselves warm, and they looked very funny as well as if they were fat... hahaha, I can tell why people get that complex where they look fat wearing big clothes for winter. They’re retards for thinking that, but still, I can understand them now.

“You two seem to have finally stopped screaming...” said Syllis.

“Yeah, my bad. Catarina is a handful sometimes. She has temperamental problems.” I said.

“I heard that!!!” roared Catarina in the back.

I felt as if chills ran through my spine as I heard her screams. She’s quite the savage woman.

“Wow! S-So these are the ruins...? They look awfully disappointing!” said Bellerine, looking at the faraway place.

Lucifer looked at the little cocky rabbit girl as he seemed mildly angered.

“It might look like that, but this place was once a big Kingdom where many Majin and Beast-kin lived together in harmony, all gathered from around the continent. The Demon king only wanted to live in

peace, but the humans disliked those different from them and always called other non-human races invaders from the other continents... These bastards couldn't bear seeing a place where demi-humans could live in harmony!" said Lucifer angrily.

"Huh? Eh? Okay?" said Bellerine, feeling a bit confused about the entire rant that Lucifer threw out of nowhere right there...

"Lucifer, you just threw a pretty big rant. Calm down. Bellerine doesn't know anything of that." I said.

"...*Sigh*. Sorry, my bad... I sometimes lose my temper over stupid things." He sighed.

"I-It's okay... I can understand your pain. Maria had told us about a bit of who you used to be. It is an honor to be with such an ancient dragon." said Syllis.

"...Don't mind my past. I am merely a reanimated corpse now," sighed Lucifer.

He was surprisingly humble sometimes, to the point he offended others that saw him as someone special in the process, which is quite annoying. To be honest, I've always hated people like this. I would hate him if he wasn't my Lucy, that likes to be spoiled when we are alone.

Of course, in his dragon form, he really gives off a different and more intimidating vibe, so his words came out even more seriously and made the two rabbit kin a bit intimidated as if chills ran through their spines as well... This guy should seriously calm down sometimes.

"S-Sorry for having offended you, sir dragon..." said Syllis.

Lucifer looked down at the rabbits and sighed.

"N-No... It is fine. I was just trying to act cool, don't feel intimidated by me." He apologized at the end.

"Can I climb you?" asked Bellerine, wandering around Lucifer's large draconic body.

“W-Well, I guess you can...” said Lucifer.

The rabbit girl began to climb over Lucifer while the two twins also began to wonder if they could.

There was also a large and beautiful panther at my side, my beloved Kuro, who had been napping inside my shadows for a while, but I called him out.

Unlike living panthers, he doesn't produce heat, sadly, so it would have been quite pointless to bring him out when we were sleeping.

“Mraoo!”

The adorable Kuro meowed like an actual cat, but with a deeper voice to it, as he was more of a panther- Well, he's actually a chimera Undead made up of many monster parts I made as our third companion in the dungeon. He was pulling the carriage a while back but decided to go back to my shadows when things got too chilly.

“Oho, my little Kuro! Did you come out to see the place? Ah, Raven, come here too!” I said.

“CRAAA!”

A giant Undead crow flew down to my side. It was already around a meter big. This was my crow Undead, the one I had named Raven, he's mostly a scouter than anything, but he's slowly practicing his fighting skills over time.

—

Chapter 224

—

While the other Undead I make is qualified mostly as the “army,” and I don't mind if they die or not, as I even sometimes might use them as detonation fodder for my Undead Detonation Skill, those I name are special in my heart, these are special and not just fodder to be revived over and over again.

The Undead I name is often special to me. They have a place inside of my heart and are my family, such as Partner, Kuro, Raven, and the new addition of Pyro, the blazing giant spider, who also jumped out of my shadows.

“Gryshi!”

The giant blazing spider greeted Kuro and Raven as the two jet-black undead pets looked at it rather angrily.

They had yet to get used to Pyro being part of the main crew now, especially because he was covered in flames, so he was not liked. Undead are naturally weak to the fire element. Even as strong as they had grown, Kuro and Raven still see Pyro as a menace that might threaten them, so they are not too fond of him.

I think they probably fear that he might end up burning them without Pyro realizing it. After all, he’s a fire-covered monster! He could do anything if he went insane.

Anyways, enough monster drama for now.

The Goblins finally came out as well, it was one of the few Majin Tribes we have with us, actually the only complete one we ever had, and they were all wearing tight winter clothes.

Most of the warriors had evolved into Hobgoblins, but those that were not into fighting were still rather low-leveled. The Elder, in specific, was still an Old Goblin, and so were most of those that didn’t fight.

“Well, we are here... It took us a while, but we have finally reached our destination!” said the Goblin Elder.

“I really thought you would end up kicking the bucket before we even reached our destiny, old man. I am pretty glad we are here...” said the Goblin Chief.

“Papa, look! A lot of snow everywhere! Can we make a snowman?” asked Gofumin.

"Maybe later... I don't know if it's okay for you to grab snow, your tiny hands will get all frozen." Said the Goblin Chief, petting his little daughter in his arms.

As a Hobgoblin, he had grown into a pretty big size, almost human-sized, so his little daughter looked even more baby-like when he held her like that.

"You three are finally here... I think we are complete with you; the entire crew is here." I said.

"Haha, I guess... it has been truly a long journey, hasn't it?" asked the Goblin Chief.

"Yeah, it was filled with perilous encounters, but we did everything we could, and we managed to get through them all... In here, it should be super hard for the church of the Vampires to reach us, so we can be safe for a while, hopefully forever... But you're never safe forever in this world." I said.

Since we began our journey, we had been going through several trials. It has been quite a perilous journey indeed, but there was also a lot of fun in what we did. I think we could say it was a mildly enjoyable journey... aside from the giant spiders and then having to heal rabbit kin from a deadly disease.

Well, and there was the whole fight against the hunters, the priests, and the vampires! Wow, that was such a massive mess of a fight. I am glad we managed to get out of that place safely... if it wasn't because of my Shadow Storage and my ability to self-divide as a snake ghost, things might have gotten a bit too bad. I am happy I picked up the Gorgon Evolution.

A lot of my shenanigans wouldn't have been possible without having evolved into this amazing snake ghost capable of creating snake clones and dividing her mind through each snake head... And well, there are also my cheat abilities helping me at that...

"We are finally here, at long last. Everyone is safe as well. It was very hard..." sighed Emeraldine.

"Yeah, it was quite hard... But we are finally here at long last. The journey was super long, and we kind of lost ourselves around it, but we finally reached the destination." I said.

"What should we do first? Maybe we should quickly settle down in some abandoned houses..." said Partner.

"Why some scrawny little houses? I want to take over the castle there! If nobody is doing it, I am taking the throne room as my room." Said Catarina.

"That'll only happen above my own corpse." Said Lucifer.

"You're already a corpse, giant lizard." Said Catarina.

"Maria, remind me again why you decided to make this woman an ally..." said Lucifer.

"She's strong, and we needed more heavy hitters. She also helps to lift stuff." I said.

"...I guess." Said Lucifer.

Amongst all of us, he and Partner were the only heavy hitters, so we needed a third one to balance it out. Catarina was the perfect option, so even with her horrid personality, we had to get her in.

"If we could take over the castle, then we can rest there and enjoy a nice time in that closed building. It doesn't seem to have deteriorated, unlike the other things!" said Partner.

"Yes, we could stay there. It does look comfy...." I said.

"How about that one tower at the side? It feels like it could have some more rooms. It has not deteriorated either..." said Emeraldine.

"Ah, that's the Demon King's Castle and the Magician's Tower. Both buildings are probably shrouded in leftover mana and maybe some enchantments left behind... this is probably why they have not deteriorated, unlike the other things..." said Lucifer.

“So that’s how it is.... I thought they were being occupied by someone or something like that. It would be pretty crazy...” said Emeraldine.

“Yeah, I sure hope there are some people at the very least. It would be nice....” I said.

“It seems... unlikely. I cannot sense a single sign of life there...” sighed Lucifer.

Chapter 225

We moved forward into the ruined city of the Demon Kingdom at long last. The snow below our feet felt rather weird when we stepped forward, and Gofumin had already fallen into a hole when she tried to walk around but was promptly rescued from the snow hole.

After we reached the area near the small forest, the snow receded, and we could see that there was a lot of ground now. The trees seemed to naturally clean the snow in the surroundings.

“L o o k!”

Partner pointed out at something moving in the distance as she took out her spear.

There was a large, white-colored wolf wandering around. It suddenly noticed our large group, slowly moved through the caravan behind us and seemed alarmed.

The creature was a Frost Wolf, a C Rank monster. It is very dangerous, it could easily kill any of the people we are carrying around, so it wouldn’t be good if it could sneak into the caravan and grab a person. It also was around two meters in height, so it was quite the titan.

However, our presence alone intimidated it, as it ran for his life right after that, without even looking back at us... Okay then, bye!

"The wolf just escaped? Okay then, I guess he didn't want to risk it for the biscuit. It is understandable, to be honest." Said Emeraldine.

"Yeah, but it was odd. He looked fearful. Do I look scary?" asked Syllis.

"Syllis, I think you're the cutest in the group. It might have been intimidated by the rest of us...." I said as I looked at our group.

There was a giant dragon, three ghosts, a powerful Vampire... a powerful zombie... yeah, it is obvious.

"Those might hunt in packs, though. If they come back in big groups, we might have to exterminate them. There didn't seem to be wolves here back then... In fact, it was never this chilly either." Said Lucifer.

"Hm, I wonder if the chilly part comes from somewhere else?" wondered the Goblin Chief.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, there is the tale of monsters in the shape of women being able to summon storms of wind and make domains of snow... I think they were passed down from Majin culture." Said the Goblin Chief.

"Wait, you mean Yuki-onna? Those are Majin, and they're a race of good people... They would never do such a thing as this... this must just be some sort of climate change..." said Lucifer.

"No, there are other monsters... They're called Frost People..." said the Goblin Chief.

"Frost People? Sounds like a weird name... but sure, I believe you...." I said.

"Well, whatever that 'frost people' is, I don't think they're here." Said Lucifer.

We got inside the walls at long last, as the door was wide open, with a massive crack that let everyone pass easily, carriages included.

After that, we reached the interior. There was a massive ghost town everywhere, which decorated the place with beautiful scenery of dreadfulness.

“Ah, this place is really quite deserty, isn’t it?” commented Emeraldine.

“Yes, it is...” said Lucifer.

“Huh? Look, there’s a lot of ice around...” said Partner.

“Right...” said Emeraldine.

I noticed that the floor in this entire area was all paved, so it was going to be easy to settle down. Mostly, all houses were deteriorated and filled with snow... and Partner pointed out something: large ice spikes spread all around the area.

The kids began wandering around us for a bit as Takeshi reached an ice spike of almost 20 meters and looked into its interior.

His face suddenly turned pale at what he saw, and he quickly called us over to go see it.

“What is it?” I asked.

“Th-This is... Look!”

Takeshi pointed out into the ice spike as I looked into its interior and then realized that between all the blurriness, there was... something there.

Actually, there were people in there....

Inside, I found a group of over six people in there, all frozen inside this ice.

They looked pale white, with pointy ears. There was a small blue-skinned girl there as well, and another was green-skinned- wait, that's a goblin.

"Th-This is awful... they died frozen..." said Takeshi.

"No... this is not a normal freeze...." I said.

"So you think the same? This is indeed not normal..." said Emeraldine.

"Th-This is... the people... Don't tell me..." muttered Lucifer.

He began flying all around, finding dozens after dozens of people frozen in this perpetual ice.

"Th-This is...! Who did this?! I can't believe it... Why?! Why would anyone freeze them alive!?" asked Lucifer.

"Lady Maria! Can you feel their souls around? Perhaps with your powers you could find some clues..." asked the Goblin Chief.

"I..."

I looked around and didn't find any souls.

In fact, calling this place a ghost town was not accurate. This place was far from being a ghost town. It was just completely emptied of anything. Not even ghosts lived here.

There was just nothing in here... What the heck?

“This place is far from being a ghost town. It is just... nothing....” I said.

“What?! You can’t see any souls? So it wasn’t just me...” said Lucifer.

And then, I detected it.

Faint presences everywhere within the ice.

I looked deeper with my phantasmal eyes and found out what was happening.

The souls of the people were here. They were in their bodies.

They were still alive, that’s it.

But... something else was bothering me.

The souls there were sealed into their bodies through the ice.

This ice... was not normal. It was some sort of powerful spell that sealed the people and the souls inside.

“The ice is definitely not normal; it froze the people in place and sealed them in here... This is honestly quite awful.” I said.

“Gods... What happened here?” sighed Lucifer.

It seemed that there was already a mystery here to resolve... and a problem to also tackle.

Fire doesn’t seem to work... How can we unseal these people?

Chapter 226

In front of us, there was a heartbreaking scene. Countless people were all frozen in perpetual ice that even sealed their souls inside, without leaving them any alternative but to remain in there.

Their bodies are not alive nor dead, but their souls cannot escape such bodies and go to the afterlife, perpetually sealed in this cold for countless days. I don't know how long it has been since this happened. There was not a single soul to ask them this question.

It was all desolate.

Lucifer looked around as he went back to his humanoid form and suddenly kneeled over the floor while covering his face with his hands.

"How... How could this have happened? Who did this? Who... did this?!" he shouted.

I could clearly feel the frustration and anger swelling inside of his heart and showing clearly in the expressions on his often-expressionless face. Undead can show emotions. He had been simply suppressing them all this time.

But now, he was showing them all, and grief, frustration, anger, sorrow, and more were mixing together within his face as he began to hit the ground angrily, without being able to believe why this was happening to begin with.

"Why? What happened..." he muttered.

I walked toward him, and I patted his back.

"Calm down..." I said.

Lucifer looked at me as his eyes began to leak tears.

This really hurt him.

Perhaps because he had the faint hope that there would be survivors.

But now, he found them all frozen as if they were placed here as a trophy.

It was a disgrace to all of them and an insult to the demon lord and him as well.

Who exactly did this?

Well, whoever dared to do this is really the worst.

The complete disregard for the people.

And not even giving them a second chance at dying and reincarnation, but hating on them and sealing their souls in here.

In a way, it might be more ruthless than death.

Perpetually trapped in a prison of eternal cold, their bodies frozen, and their souls already shrouded in this cold so much that they must be paralyzed or agonizing in pain even now.

Just hearing this reminds me of when I was inside the graveyard, finding myself inside of my own grave, without even being able to run away from my own decomposing body.

I ended up spending years there seeing my own body decay. I slept, I tried to sleep, but it was quite hard to sleep... It wasn't something easy to do, even as a ghost that doesn't require sleep.

Maybe it might not be the same as these people, but the experience of being caged like this after death without even being given a chance to rest after death is rather frustrating.

I don't know the background of these people or something, but there should be some reason behind why everyone is here. What happened after the Demon King died, and were these people from those ancient times or new?

Lucifer's tears of sorrow began to flow out of his eyes as he averted his gaze from me.

"I really shouldn't have held my hopes..." he sighed.

"No... They can be saved... Don't be like this...." I said.

I approached him, and I hugged him from behind.

"We can find a way to save them together... Instead of thinking about all the sad things, how about we try to find a way to rescue them?" I asked.

"A way..." he sighed.

I smiled back at him as I tried to cheer him up. I cleaned the tears out of his eyes as he looked back at me with his aquamarine eyes, which were suddenly not crimson-red anymore.

"You're okay now?" I asked.

"...Yeah," he sighed.

"Come on now, stand up...." I said.

I lent him my hand, and he gently took it and stood up on his own. Standing up at my side, he looked around the pillars of ice with sorrow.

“What could have happened here?” he sighed.

“I believe something not so good....” I sighed.

“And there is just nobody that could have documented this. We are alone in searching for clues.” Said Emeraldine.

“Lucifer... Are you okay?” asked Partner.

She had grown close to him eventually and was worried when she saw him crying.

“Yes, I am okay... Thanks for worrying.” Said Lucifer with a faint smile.

“I-I didn’t worry for you or anything... It is just that... Maria-sama gets worried for you when you cry, so I get worried...” said Partner, trying to mask her concern.

“She’s just worried... I am also worried.” Said Emeraldine.

“We are all into this together,” I said.

“You girls...” sighed Lucifer.

“Not only them, but we are here as well to help... We’ll get to the end of this mystery together.” Said Catarina while crossing her arms.

“Indeed. Our flames cannot unseal nor melt this ice... But we’ll find another way!” said Silvio.

“Yes, we’ll do it!” said Francesco.

“I cannot do much, but please count me in,” said Syllis.

“I don’t know what I could even do... But I am also with big brother...” said Bellerine.

“I also want to heal these people... They really didn’t deserve such a fate...” said Laura.

“It makes me feel bad for them... If their souls are still there, then we could even find a way to revive them if we find how to melt the ice!” said Takeshi.

“Indeed, there can be a way...” said the Goblin Elder.

“We can cooperate to find the solution.” Said the Goblin Chief.

“Cheer up, uncle Lucifer!” said Gofumin.

Lucifer smiled as he petted Gofumin’s head.

“Yeah... I am good. Don’t worry about me. We’ll find a way together out of this...” said Lucifer.

We looked into the large Demon King’s castle as we all walked inside with a new will reforged in our hearts.

It was a dark and damp place, and it was also quite cold, but this was going to be our new home.

Chapter 227

Since we reached the abandoned and desolate Demon Kingdom, a whole week has passed.

We had spent our days leisurely working on many things. We had to leave the investigation about what happened to the people for later, as we had many people we needed to take care of first.

The cold temperatures were not good for everyone, and we had to quickly find shelter for all the group of people and give them the things necessary for survival as well.

Ultimately, we also want them to be able to survive by themselves, but as they were mostly all slaves, their mentalities were not in the best of places, and their bodies were atrophied due to all the bad treatment they received.

It was going to be hard, but we had to quickly rehabilitate all the people, both in health and spirit.

Well, the spirit wasn't so hard, since the moment we arrived here, they got happier as if this place was filled with some sort of dark energy that resonated with something that made them comfortable.

Some said it reminded them of me for some reason, and the more we stayed in here as the days passed, the stronger this energy became as it resonated with me.

Essentially it wasn't because of the energy itself but also because of me. Yes, it was because of me. They had been acting like this because they see me as their savior, and thanks to my Title Skills, it only becomes worse as they make me seem like a Queen, a Ghost Queen, or something.

And they seem to adore me, which only becomes more awkward... I wish I wasn't this awkward with people I don't know well, but I cannot really take them praising me and kneeling before me, so I always ask them to act casually and not mind my presence. However, that only makes them think of me as highly, as someone benevolent or something.

You guys, I am not really as amazing as you think. Please stop this!

Sigh... But there isn't much I can do for now, and I consider myself someone benevolent at the end, so I accepted their praises at the very least, but anything that would lower them, such as kneeling, was prohibited.

Aside from these small issues, the entire rebuilding project had been advancing at a snail's pace. We haven't done anything at all other than relocating the people and mildly repairing some of the houses that remained in the best states. However, we still didn't want to separate the people too far away from the castle, so most of them were located within the houses all around the castle.

We repaired these houses with the wood we went to cut from the forest surrounding the fallen Kingdom. There was plenty of wood there, and by swinging my giant ax, I was able to easily chop down like ten trees at once... so it was fairly easy to get wood!

Catarina used her monstrous strength with Lucifer's help to move away from dangerous boulders that were around and anything else that seemed dangerous. The ice pillars and spikes left with the people inside remained the same. We can't move them, they're stuck on the floor, and this special ice cannot be melted easily.

Some of the people began to leave candles around these spikes with people inside and offered their prayers to the goddess of death and the goddess of ice and snow for their salvation.

Aside from this, we have been relocating the people, as there is a lot of lone people without families, so we have to pair them up with others so they can live in the tight places. We have responsibility for them. After all, most of the houses are ruined and filled with snow, the ones that were mildly okay are a few, and the rest of the houses were actually constructed with fresh wood we went to chop off out of the forests outside.

We were also planning on repurposing these ruined houses' wood. Still, the wood is frozen and rotten at the same time, so it is not really that good for anything other than making bonfires, which we are using to warm up the people. Everyone has a chimney inside their house, and there are also large bonfires around the town too. Hence, there is always a place to warm up.

The chilly temperatures seem to be enhanced by the large ice pillars and ice spikes around, so the chilly temperatures are even chillier than if they were not there. These pillars of ice are literal freezers right at our side.

Another bad thing is that we cannot really grow any crops in these frozen lands, no plants would ever grow in here other than pines, and those take years after years to grow. So we have to rely on our plan to capture and raise cattle animals or monsters, while we mostly survive through the rations I had gotten from the Duchy of Affnaria and from fishing in the river and the lake nearby or hunting any monster we come across.

But these areas are a new level of desolation, so it is hard to even produce actual food here... But it's not like we got anywhere else to go. The coast is a few dozens of kilometers from here, where I thought we could get a larger quantity of fish, but the waters there are thunderous and dangerous, and it is very cold as well, so we'll save up that project of building a small fishing town there for later.

As of now, we are still reconstructing the demon king castle while making more houses out of fresh wood for the people. Some of them are staying in the comfier rooms inside the castle, although they're all covered in dust to the brim. We had already found several monsters inside that had made this place their home, mostly Giant Rats, Horned Rabbits, Black Spiders, and an assortment of smaller critters, which we had been using for food...

It has been a rough week.

Chapter 228

Aside from relocating the people, we had been helping them regain their health and spirit.

The spirit wasn't hard. As I mentioned earlier, they have a strong faith in the death goddess now, which I am her apostle.

They had grown closer to the Goddess of Death religion than I imagined, and they were even building small altars made of wood and ice for her while decorating them with the bones of the monsters we hunted.

This new religion had come out of nowhere, though, and according to Emeraldine, Catarina, and the Fire Ghost duo, the goddess of death is nowhere prayed upon nor considered a figure of religion. She's often seen as an antagonistic figure by most of the humans in the Midgard Continent.

This is because she represents the end of all things and the eventual death of all things. In contrast, the god of light represents life, and while the death goddess brings all souls to the desolate and cold Helheim, those that fight bravely and have strong-willed hearts and faith are offered the Valhalla after death instead.

Yeah, all religions are forged around what happens after death pretty much, although in this world, gods' existences are pretty much confirmed. They're not some sort of belief, and that's it. They're confirmed, there is magic, and there are Undead, who are often called the "servants of Hel" who have come to invade the world to bring more souls down to Helheim or something, so this is why Undead are seen so badly too.

All of this is pretty stupid when you think about it. Most religions that had death gods on Earth actually prayed to them as figures of transcendental position, death and life are a cycle, and it shouldn't be feared upon. The death gods of these various religions were all there to bring you to the afterlife. Still, they didn't necessarily represent something bad or evil, so it is pretty stupid that they're remotely considered evil here with Hel.

Hel is a nice woman. Actually, she spoke to me a week ago and was pretty chill. She was even motherly, worried about me and all... there's nothing wrong with her!

However, I can understand that people might hate her. After all, the God of Light seems to be a sick bastard that brainwashed the humans into hating her for some reason. He really is an idiot, especially because she's supposed to be his granddaughter...

Ah, did I mention that not only do the continents have the names of Norse Realms, but also the Gods have the names of the Norse Gods? The God of Light is actually named Odin. His second hand is the God of Thunder, Thor. Then there is the God of Chaos Loki, his daughter, the Goddess of Death Hel, and so on...

There is even Freyr and Freyja as the God of Nature and the Goddess of Love and Motherhood or something, respectively...

Then there is the Goddess of snow and ice, Skadi... And what else? Well, there are many other gods, but I forgot about those that didn't matter that much to me.

Anyways, I think they adapted the Goddess of Death religion as a "requirement" made by themselves when they realized I was a ghost, so they thought they must pray to her, as I am an Undead that goes against the God of Light religion. They are already betraying him from the beginning, so they might as well pray to the literal Satan figure of this continent, Hel.

Anyways, because of this, and also the normalization of Undead by all my other allies that are undead, and the daily life zombies and other Undead they see wandering around town doing work for us, such as the zombie spiders troops carrying items and more, they had been made into normal citizens, and therefore they all move their faith to the goddess of death who accepts undead and see them as her children, so if they get friendly with them, they also get favor points from her or something...

I am still getting the knack of how to lead people, but those with a talent for it, such as the Goblin Elder and the Goblin Chief, are helping a lot in handling them, so I am relatively happy with how things are turning out.

Also, not everyone is a former slave. A large chunk is former citizens from the goblin village. There were former slaves there, but they recovered over time with the help of the goblins and are more competent than the slaves we rescued.

These people really help at helping the former slaves that we got in our latest journey to recover. I cannot be there to cheer them up all the time, so there are other people taking care of that. Thankfully, I've also seen Emeraldine working in there a lot. Her ability and magic help her see the emotions of people and help guide them into a brighter state of mind.

Thanks to her help, things are getting better too. The rest? Well, they all suck at cheering people up. They're all weirdos. Even Partner can't do anything other than fight or kill. She's still practicing anything that she could do aside from that, but the best thing is cooking as of now, so she's doing a lot of cooking with the other chefs. We got to make common food for the entire town for now.

We don't have enough resources to let everyone make their own food, and I am not going to let them starve while telling them, "go hunt your own food, now you got a home, move!" or something. I am not so heartless! So we still make big stews every day for everyone, distributing bread and warm tea and coffee.

We can still get meat by hunting and using this meat to make stew, we are using less and fewer potatoes, carrots, and the rest so it can last longer, but we'll ultimately be left without them.

So we have to think of better ways to get vegetables...

And Emeraldine came up with a grand idea.

Chapter 229

"[Strong Axe Strike]!"

I swung the giant golden Axe that I had stolen from Lion back then.

The gigantic ax was infused with my Mana and gained a large amount of death and darkness aura around it. The powerful slicing strike was then unleashed over a dozen of meters around me.

The powerful and deadly slicing shockwave reached all the trees around me, as they were all chopped away in a single sweep.

SLAAAASH!

BOOM!

Dozens of trees fell to the ground instantly, as a lot of black smoke was left lingering around...

"That's a dozen now. This forest is getting thinned very fast." Said Emeraldine at my side.

“Hehe, now guys, go take them!” I said.

“Gryssshiii!”

Pyro guided the spider zombies with him as they all grabbed the logs and began to carry them over their large backs back to the inside of the walls.

“With these dozen of logs, we can make a few more houses so the people can live more comfortably... It is a pity that the old houses are all rotten and frozen. Nobody can live comfortably there.” Sighed Partner.

“Yeah, that’s the saddest part. Lucifer had a hard time accepting that we would have to slowly take down the houses because they were irreparable... We can use their materials to fuel our fire, also using the fresh wood to construct houses and furniture instead... I guess that’s a plus. Old wood burns very well.” Said Emeraldine.

“Indeed, it is quite sad. But that’s for the best. I am sure these people won’t mind if we get the new houses when they finally wake up. Of course, we are saving anything that we find inside that might seem valuable, such as portraits, jewels, gold, and other things, so they can grab them back when they’re finally back, eventually, one day... in the far future, I guess.” I sighed.

“I suppose... For now, let’s go back. I am freezing here... these clothes are not enough for me...” sighed Emeraldine, as she was trembling in this cold.

“Alright, let us go,” I said.

“Bring us there, Pyro!” I said.

“Gysshiii!”

Pyro was covered in a natural layer of phantasmal flames because he died while being burned, and I revived him as undead while also being in flames, so the flames were somewhat assimilated into him.

This grants him the ability to manipulate these flames, so they don't burn when you touch them, but keep their warmth, so he is a rare warm bug.

When you touch his back, you can feel his warmth, so it is the favorite mount for Emeraldine and all the other living people, such as the twins and more.

We slowly made our way back to the interior of the walls as we were greeted by a few skeletons and zombies carrying stones inside, which they had crushed down from larger boulders that came out of the walls themselves.

We were making bricks out of these boulders to slowly repair the walls, which were all ruined, with many holes everywhere. It was going to take a while, but we were doing our best.

I had thought about a way to make the walls into a giant inanimate undead, a haunted wall of sorts, but I need a lot of souls for that, and I cannot find any. Simply using Fake Life on it won't work properly on something so massive.

We brought the logs into the main town inside the large, abandoned city, and we were greeted by Lucifer and Catarina, who was just done with carrying another massive boulder away from the main town, as these might end up rolling around and causing commotions we don't really want to see.

"Phew... That's it... For now." Sighed Catarina.

"Indeed, we should rest for the moment, I don't feel the pain, but my undead muscles are clearly tired and feel soggy." Said Lucifer.

"Nothing that some Undead Healing can't do!" I said.

"We appreciate it, but you don't have to overexert yourself either." Said Lucifer.

"What are you talking about? This is just a simple skill, and I got more mana than I can even use...." I said.

I touched Lucifer's shoulders and gave him a brief massage, the flow of death energy recovered his tired muscles and mildly cracked bones. The same was with Catarina.

I left the logs to be handled by the Undead and the other people, ready to saw them off and prepare them to assemble a few houses in the next days, as we walked inside the castle, which was way more lively and filled with light.

We have mostly cleansed a lot of the dust everywhere, and we washed away the things inside as well, there are many portraits that we made sure to leave alone, but there are still a lot of rooms that we have yet to clean completely, a few of them still infested by food- I mean rats and other critters.

Rats seem to be able to live and reproduce super-fast in here, and they even just eat rotten wood, so I had thought about taming them and making them into our cattle animals. Giant Rats are an E Rank Monster at most, and they can grow up to a meter in height, so they can carry a lot of decent meat.

They also naturally form fat in their bodies to resist the cold, so their meat is actually tastier than you would think a rat's meat would taste, and they are rather gentle when tamed.

Fast reproduction cycles, fast growth, don't need any crazy food, can even eat rotten wood, yeah, rats are going to become our cattle animal, Giant Dark Rats at that. It is decided.

However, how do we deal with plants?

Well, as we all gathered to eat a meal together, Emeraldine had a plan.

"I've been thinking this for a while and slowly preparing, but I think with my Nature Spirit, it could be possible to find a way to enhance the growth of plants even in this environment..." said Emeraldine.

"Really?!" I exclaimed.

"Yes... But it's going to be a bit hard. We'll have to prepare what's called a special closed space..." said Emeraldine.

We were all sitting around an old black table that might have once been used by the old Demon King and his family as we enjoyed a tasty stew made of the greasy meat of the Giant Rats we had begun to raise. We cannot go overboard on eating them, or they'll disappear in a flash, so we have already left a dozen that I had already tamed alone inside a small farm, where they live comfortably eating rotten wood and anything else. They're even alright with eating trash too.

But despite all of that, their meat is very tasty. I guess they're like pigs too, who just eat trash but have mighty tasty meat for some reason, mostly out of the grease they accumulate, which these fat rats also got so they can survive the winter.

These rats should be reproducing already, just like a little clone reported to me, so they'll make more little rats that'll grow up into healthy adults and make more and more rats. I know this is a bit bizarre, but you have to adapt to what you can use in the end.

Using giant rats as cattle is the only thing we can do in here where literally nothing else survives other than wild wolves, or bears, or even fiercer monsters.

Normal cattle animals would die out of the coldness and also reproduce way slower than monsters. Because giant dark rats are a monster, they can reproduce very quickly as long as they got energy and mana reserves. They're made to flood the world and devour anything.

And then we can make an army of rats based on how fast they're attempting to reproduce, and we flood the world with the plague! I will become the plague itself! Well, I think I already got some skills related to that.

Wait, is this why I could tame rats without problems despite them not being Undead? Perhaps my influence also extends to creatures "Related" to my element and nature.

And DARK rats are perhaps within the category of "related" to my elements, so maybe I had an easy time taming them, as I was obviously stronger than all of them, so surrendering was their only option.

But just surrendering out of fear and being tamed and acting gently with their master are completely different things. This only means that they were instantly tamed and made into my pets in an instant.

Ah, now I feel bad about thinking that I must eat my pets...

Well, I am already enjoying their chewy meat in this stew, so sorry, we don't have any other option, rats! I hope that all of you that go to heaven will forgive me. I guess they're going to Helheim, but I suppose it is the same. Souls are not tortured there. They just spend some time in complete hollowness, darkness, and coldness. Then, they're cleansed of memories by swimming in an incredibly cold river, only to go back into a new body reincarnated without any memories of the past.

That's how it works! Hel is not keeping the souls for herself and helps a lot in the Reincarnation Circle of this world by itself, so she's a big help to literally everyone. I honestly don't know how the other Gods don't appreciate it, and on this Continent, they somehow see her as a villain? This doesn't make any sense. She helps souls reincarnate. What more do you want? She's doing the entire world a big favor.

But nooooo, goddess of death bad!

Sigh.

Anyways, let's go back to the present. We were sitting here discussing our daily lives in this newfound and slowly building Kingdom as Emeraldine came up with an interesting idea that, according to her, she had been planning to do for a long time.

"I've been thinking this for a while and slowly preparing, but I think with my Nature Spirit, it could be possible to find a way to enhance the growth of plants even in this environment..." said Emeraldine.

"Really?!" I exclaimed.

"Yes... But it's going to be a bit hard. We'll have to prepare what's called a special closed space..." said Emeraldine.

Everyone looked at Emeraldine while raising an eyebrow. What did she mean by “closed space”? I am pretty sure I don’t have spatial magic to manipulate space and make a small dimension. That’s a bit of a stretch! My Shadow Storage doesn’t really count as space magic!

“Emeraldine, I cannot really make another dimension. I don’t have that kind of powers....” I sighed.

“Eh? N-No, I didn’t mean that! Geez...” sighed Emeraldine.

“What? Then what do you mean?” asked Catarina as she didn’t get it either.

“I wonder if she meant something like... a greenhouse?” asked Lucifer.

“Greenhouse?” I asked.

“What’s that?” wondered Partner.

“A greenhouse is a special closed space that you make to put plants inside. They can get direct sunlight from a transparent ceiling while being protected from the harsh environments such as cold, winds, plagues, and more...” said Lucifer.

“I-I didn’t know that was a thing...” said Silvio.

“Me neither. I have never seen something like that before.” Said Francesco.

“Interesting... So that’s what you want?” asked Catarina.

I remember it now. Back on Earth, there is also one of these things. They’re often called greenhouses, conservatory, and glasshouses... The ceiling needs to be made of glass if we don’t have material like transparent plastic.

“Yes, those things! I remember seeing them somewhere in a duchy I once visited. If you make them, we can put plants there without risking having them get frozen by the coldness of the outside world. Snow and other things won’t get inside. It should be big enough to maintain many plants though, so we can feed everyone...” said Emeraldine.

“Hm, that’s an interesting idea, but how do we craft such a thing? It does appear to be quite complicated. Making an entire greenhouse...” said Lucifer.

“This is a challenge greater than a Dungeon Boss....” I sighed.
